ISRAEL/DOCUMENTS 1953 COMPANION VOLUME 8

STATE OF ISRAEL
ISRAEL STATE ARCHIVES

DOCUMENTS ON THE FOREIGN POLICY OF ISRAEL

VOLUME 8
1953

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COMPANION VOLUME

JERUSALEM 1995

Staff, Volume Eight

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Printed in Israel
by the Government Printer
Typeset by IBRT Ltd., Jerusalem

ISSN 0334-1062
ISBN 965-279-021-4

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FOREWORD

This volume, the eighth in the series relating to the foreign policy of Israel, covers 1953. The editorial policy followed in the present volume is the same as that which governed the preparation of the previous volumes; however, due to the growing volume of documentation and the variety of subjects and problems that occupied Israeli foreign policy during that year, more strict selection of documents had to be employed, with the focus on the main subjects dealt with by Israeli policy makers.

In order to get a complete picture of the foreign relations of Israel, it is advisable to read concurrently with this book previously published official sources, such as *Divrei Ha-Knesset* (Knesset Report), *Reshumot* (the official gazette), official publications of the Foreign Ministry, as well as the official publications of the United Nations.

Most of the documents published in this volume derive from the files of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, now in the custody of the Israel State Archives. A few come from the files of the Prime Minister's Office, also in the Israel State Archives; a very small number originate from files kept in the Israel Military and Defence Establishment Archives or in the archives of the Israel Labour Party. In writing the notes and the introduction, the editors relied on additional material filed in other departments in the Israel State Archives as well as on other material in the Israel Military and Defence Establishment Archives, on documentation in the British Public Records Office, and on U.S. Department of State documents as published in the series *Foreign Relations of the United States*. The editors also had access to the minutes of Government meetings, which are still not available for public research purposes.

Arrangement of documents. The documents are arranged chronologically. Documents composed or dispatched in parts, over a number of days, are placed according to the earliest date. The position of telegrams in the chronological sequence is based on the earliest known date among the following: date of composition, date of dispatch, or, where neither of these is known, date of receipt. Reports of discussions and meetings appear under the date of composition, if that was close to the date of the subject of the report. When there was a significant lapse between a meeting or discussion and the composition of the report on it, the location of the document is determined by the date of the event reported on (with the date of composition included in a note).

The text. The text printed in the Main Volume is that of the original document, except for the following editorial changes and emendations:

(a) Addresses of senders and addressees, as well as dates in their original form, have been deleted. In some of the reports, memoranda, and minutes,

the original headings have also been omitted. The deleted information is incorporated in part in a standard format, in the heading supplied by the editor (see below), or in a note.

(b) A number of passages that are of a personal nature, repetitive, or of no direct relevance to foreign policy have been omitted. All such omissions are indicated in the text and as a rule are explained in the notes.

(c) Minor errors (slips of the pen, typographical errors, misspellings) have been corrected silently. No attempt has been made beyond that to correct style, syntax, or grammar.

(d) Common abbreviations and abbreviations whose meaning is not in doubt have been expanded to full form in square brackets on their first appearance in the document. Subsequently, the abbreviations have been retained in the text. Abbreviations of proper names have always been expanded to full form in square brackets. However, abbreviations commonly pronounced as such and acronyms (e.g., UN, IDF, U.S. etc.) have not been altered.

(e) Missing words have in some cases been added, either conjecturally (within square brackets) or on the basis of a parallel text of the same document (in square brackets and with an explanatory note).

(f) Original punctuation and capitalization, as well as British or American spellings, have been retained to the extent possible. Corrections have been made only in cases of obvious mistakes or to avoid misunderstandings. In telegrams, where the original punctuation is partial, the editors exercised much greater liberty in determining capitalization and punctuation.

(g) The outgoing text of telegrams has been used when extant.

(h) Signatures appended in the writer's own hand are printed in bold type.

Editorial headings. The heading includes, *inter alia*, the file reference of the document and the place of its destination, except where the addressee is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or some other agency of the Government of Israel. The origin of the document and the date of its composition or transmission are given in standard format in the heading.

Editorial notes. These provide information on important events or developments and are numbered sequentially along with the documents. They precede the earliest document that contains a reference to the subject or appear according to the date on which the event took place.

Footnotes. The annotations consists mainly of numbered footnotes, explanatory notes, and cross-references, intended to illuminate topics that might otherwise be unclear and to indicate other documents that contain additional information. The cross-references occasionally are to files and documents that remain classified, on the assumption that they will eventually be made available to scholars.

Biographical notes have been provided when necessary for a proper understanding of the text. Information on most persons mentioned in the

text is provided in the index of persons.

Companion Volume. This companion volume consists of English summaries of the Hebrew documents, a translation of the editorial notes, footnotes, introduction, and list of documents, and the indexes to the Main Volume.

Index and list of documents. A list of documents and editorial notes, indicating their main subjects, appears at the beginning of the volume; two indexes—of persons and of subjects and places—are at the end of this volume. References in the index are by document number.

Maps. The Main Volume includes two maps: one of the armistice lines between Israel and its neighbors, the other of the armistice line and demilitarized zones between Israel and Syria. The maps bear English-language legends to facilitate their use by non-readers of Hebrew.

We would like to thank all the individuals and institutions who helped in the preparation of this volume: Ambassador Michael Elitzur of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who read the manuscript and made many useful comments; Mr. Uri Elgom, director of the Israel Military and Defence Establishment Archives, and Dr. Zehava Ostfeld, of the IMDEA staff, for their assistance in locating additional documentation; Ms. Adina Drechsler, for her style-editing of the notes, the editorial notes, and the introduction; Mr. Joseph Elron, who copy-edited the main volume and supervised the proofreading; Ms. Hava Ulman, who prepared the index; Prof. Yehoshua Porat, for his guidance in the transliteration of Arabic names; Mr. Lenn Schramm and Ms. Yaffah Murciano, who translated the summaries of the Hebrew documents, the notes, and the introduction; Mr. Yohai Goel, who reviewed the English translation of the summaries and the introduction; Ms. Vera Eden, who typed the manuscript; Shlomit and Yuval Greenbaum, who prepared the maps; and Mr. Georges Weill, who proofread the documents in French.

We would like to thank all those who provided biographical information about themselves or others mentioned in the documents.

Introduction

The documents in this volume deal with Israeli foreign policy in 1953. They give us an idea of day-to-day political activity, diplomatic démarches and considerations, and the soul-searching and moods of the architects and executors of Israel's foreign policy. They reveal differences of opinion within the Foreign Ministry and the Government and shed light on the personal relationships among policymakers. Foreign Ministry documents, the minutes of cabinet meetings, and records of Knesset sessions are the main documents we can draw on to trace an outline of Israel's foreign policy. Those interested in a fuller picture, however, should consult the debates in political-party organs and sessions of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, which are not included in this volume; they present the internal and partisan considerations and context that influenced foreign-policy decisions in Israel.

Trends and events in the international arena and the Middle East, the situation along the borders and the conflict with Arab countries all shaped Israeli policy in 1953. The new Republican administration in the United States, the twilight of the Stalin regime and the changes in the Soviet Union after his death, and the tension between the blocs influenced the international situation that confronted the State of Israel. Negotiations between Britain and Egypt over the evacuation of British bases in the Suez Canal Zone and the Western Powers' intention to supply arms to Arab states also came into play. Closer to home, the skirmishes along the Jordanian border and relations with Egypt and Syria were important factors in Israel's foreign and defense policy.

In 1953, Israel had to cope with the gradual change that began make itself evident in the attitude towards Israel of the new U.S. administration; with manifestations of antisemitism in the Soviet Union, which came to a head in the "Doctors' Plot" and the severing of relations; with infiltration from Jordan and the reprisal raids that culminated in the Qibya operation; with the unsuccessful attempt to reach a settlement with Syria; and with the unexpectedly strong opposition by Syria, the UN, and the United States to the Israeli project to divert the Jordan River.

In addition to these major issues, the Foreign Ministry also dealt with the final ratification of the reparations agreement with Germany; with the transfer of the ministry to Jerusalem (July 1953); with routine relations with Europe; with expanding relations with Asian countries and deepening ties with those of Latin America.

All this variegated political activity took place against the background of a complex domestic situation. In 1953, Israel's fiscal condition deteriorated and there was a general decline in the standard of living; the proposed State

Education Law, which abolished the various partisan-political networks of primary and secondary education, sparked a coalition crisis; and a Jewish terrorist underground was uncovered. During the year, the fifth of Israel's independence, Prime Minister and Defense Minister David Ben-Gurion gradually withdrew from his official functions. He took an extended leave-of-absence in the summer; at the end of the year he submitted his resignation. Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett, who had been Acting Prime Minister during Ben-Gurion's vacation, took over for him again.

Relations with the United States and Dulles's Mid-East Tour

The linchpin of Israeli foreign policy in 1953 was relations with the United States, in the wake of the changeover in the White House in January. During the first months of the year, the new Administration was busy learning about the problems of the region; Israeli diplomats familiarized Administration officials with Israel's basic positions. This process peaked with the Mid-East tour of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, who met with Israeli officials in May 1953. When Dulles returned to Washington he drafted policy outlines that were a source of disappointment and anxiety for Israel. Starting in the summer of 1953, there was a marked change in the Administration's attitude—reflected, for example, by deferment of the grant to Israel in response to the Jordan diversion project; the American reaction to the Qibya operation; and recommendations that aid to Israel be curtailed. These were the first signs of a disposition that evolved into a full-fledged policy in the course of 1954.[1]

Early in the year, Israel's representatives in Washington and London continued their efforts, begun in late 1952, to prevent arms deliveries to Arab states.[2] In a note to Great Britain, also submitted to the United States and France, Israel protested Whitehall's decision to sell jet aircraft to Arab countries and urged Britain to reconsider its decision.[3] The arguments raised in this note and in talks with Administration officials in Washington and with the American ambassador in Tel Aviv[4] had already been advanced the previous year: any provision of arms to the Arabs must be conditional on their willingness to make progress towards peace with Israel and their strict adherence to UN resolutions. Israel even demanded that the Powers condition any sales of arms to Arab countries on a commitment by the recipients not to use them to attack Israel. Washington and London rejected the Israeli demands. Neither capital accepted the Israeli view that there was a linkage between arms sales and peace talks; instead, they

1. See I. Alteras, *Eisenhower and Israel*, pp. 105-106.
2. See Vol. 7, Companion Volume, p. xii.
3. See Nos. 5 and 6.
4. See Nos. 4, 41, and 65.

stressed the need to strengthen the friendly regimes in the Middle East, particularly Naguib's government in Egypt.

After Eisenhower replaced Truman in the White House (20 January), Israel's representatives had a new opportunity to present their government's attitude on arms supplies to the Arab countries and on other matters of interest to Israel in its relations with the United States. The main issues that were raised in the early talks with officials of the new Administration were non-reimbursable military assistance, continued economic aid, an immediate loan to stabilize its fiscal situation, Israel's integration into the Middle East defense system, and adoption of Israel's position that regional defense was impossible without its participation.[5] Continuing an earlier note on this issue, Israel's ambassador in Washington, Abba Eban, submitted a note to the new Administration (February 1953) requesting military assistance, but this did not receive the anticipated response in the course of 1953.[6]

At first, State Department officials reassured Israel's representatives that no change in U.S. policy towards Israel was forthcoming. Gradually, however, there were more and more worrying statements about the Administration's intention to strengthen the country's standing with the Arabs and remedy the favoritism that Truman, influenced by the Jewish lobby, had shown Israel.[7]

In mid-February, an American memorandum about Israeli reprisal raids across the Jordanian border,[8] which included a sharp rebuke and threat to implement the 1950 Tripartite Declaration, did not help matters. The issue was also raised in talks between David Ben-Gurion and the U.S. ambassador, Monnett Davis.[9] Israeli leaders gained the impression that a cool wind was blowing from the White House and that the cordial words directed at Israel were merely lip service.

During the first months of the new Administration, the process that led to Anglo-Egyptian negotiations on the evacuation of the British bases in the Suez Canal Zone moved forward. Great Britain tried to condition the withdrawal of its troops on Egyptian participation in regional defense arrangements—a position that was supported by the United States. Concerned about such an agreement, Israel interpreted it as a factor that would adversely affect the military and political balance in the region. Abba Eban, who early in the year had proposed to his colleagues that Israel continue on the course it had followed in the Seventh General Assembly and adopt a long-term peace policy accompanied by an information campaign on be-

5. See Nos. 6, 74, 97, and 105.
6. See No. 75 and n. 3 there.
7. See No. 115.
8. See Nos. 89 and 90.
9. See No. 97.

half of peace in the region,[10] now reverted to his old plan, arguing that, in light of expected developments in Anglo-Egyptian relations, a peace offensive should be launched on the Egyptian front. Eban believed that the Arab-Israeli conflict would be raised only at an advanced stage of the Anglo-Egyptian talks—when Egypt would be in a stronger position and enjoy Western backing—and that Israel would come out the worse for this development. He proposed informing the U.S. and Great Britain that peace between Israel and Egypt was a *sine qua non* for peace in the Middle East and throughout the world and that Israel could not wait for the conclusion of the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations to begin talks on peace in the region. Eban formulated a detailed peace plan, which included the following: guaranteeing territorial continuity to the Arab world; financial arrangements that would enable the transfer of refugees from Gaza to Sinai, Syria, and Iraq; a lifting of the economic embargo and Suez Canal blockade; economic assistance and regional cooperation; an accord on weapons issues; a non-belligerency pact and inclusion of Israel and Egypt in regional defense arrangements. He suggested that Israel operate on two levels: first, informal talks with high-ranking Egyptian officials in Europe; second, an Israel-Egypt conference convened in accordance with Article XII of the armistice agreement, which stipulated that the parties could demand the convening of a conference to reassess the agreement. Eban contended that the frequent statements about Israel's desire for direct contacts with the Arabs were no longer credible and that Israel had to demonstrate practical willingness to open peace talks.[11]

Ben-Gurion, Sharett, and several senior Foreign Ministry officials were not enthusiastic about Eban's proposal.[12] Other Foreign Ministry staffers did second the proposal and even asserted that it could constitute a historic turning point.[13] Sharett belittled the importance of Eban's plan and demurred at its dramatic presentation. The Foreign Minister tried to return the ambassador to the *terra firma* of political realities. For Sharett, the key problem was Egypt's willingness or unwillingness to make peace with Israel and whether the United States was prepared to impose peace or to condition any accord with Egypt on its agreeing to make peace with Israel. He rejected Eban's criticism and maintained that an Israeli-initiated peace offensive would be taken as a sign of political weakness.[14]

In the course of March, on the eve of Sharett's departure for the United States and Latin America, Israeli policy on the impending negotiations on the evacuation of the British bases and Israel's integration into regional

10. See Nos. 10, 12.
11. See No. 109.
12. See Nos. 144 and 149; see also the minutes of the meeting of the Mapai Central Committee, 28 March 1953, Labour Party Archives.
13. See Nos. 6, 109, and 134.
14. See Nos. 120, 121, 126, 131, 149, and 150.

defense was formulated. It was decided to reject Eban's proposal and to ask Great Britain and the United States to bear Israel in mind in their talks with Egypt. It was also decided that Israel would demand that an agreement for evacuation of the British bases be made conditional on a lifting of the Suez Canal blockade. Israel submitted a note to this effect on 14 April 1953.[15] Eban's proposal to pressure Egypt to negotiate, by virtue of Article XII, was rejected, out of concern that such a request would yield paltry results and so as not to embarrass the United States. Instead, it was decided to try to persuade the United States to pressure Egypt to begin direct negotiations with Israel as a prerequisite for any discussion of a regional defense arrangement.[16]

Sharett visited the United States in early April; his meetings with the leaders of the new Administration left him disappointed. He realized that Middle-East policy had not yet been formulated and that everyone was waiting for the results of the upcoming regional tour by Secretary of State Dulles. Nevertheless, what he heard from his hosts worried him considerably. He concluded that anti-Communism was the main factor in the Administration's policy, in which the Middle East played only one role. Israel was just one prop in the defense system the Administration sought to create in the Middle East, but its southern neighbor, Egypt, was deemed to be more important. The Administration intended to continue strengthening Naguib's regime and fashion it into a solid underpinning for regional defense. Sharett also concluded that even though American officials admitted that peace between Israel and the Arabs was an important factor in regional defense, they had not yet decided whether the two issues should be linked. He also learned that the Americans believed that peace required concessions by Israel, hearing this explicitly from Dulles's aide, Henry Byroade. Extremely disturbed by these talks, Sharett returned to Israel shortly before Dulles's visit.[17]

During May, Dulles toured several countries in the Middle East, as well as India and Pakistan. The purpose of his tour was to enlist the Arab countries in the struggle against Communism and to guarantee their support for the West in the event of a third world war. By the very fact of his tour he sought to demonstrate the considerable importance that the new Administration attached to the Middle East.[18] In the correspondence and consultations that preceded his arrival in Israel,[19] it was decided that in the talks with Dulles and his entourage Israel should emphasize its willingness to resist a Soviet attack, point out the significance of U.S. military and economic aid to Israel, and indicate the extreme importance of putting an end

15. See Nos. 166 and 167.
16. See No. 131.
17. See Nos. 153, 163, and 172.
18. See No. 204 and *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, p. 130.
19. See Nos. 193, 196, 202, and 204.

to the arms race between Israel and its neighbors and of establishing economic and cultural cooperation between them.

Dulles, the first U.S. Secretary of State to visit Israel, arrived on 13 May, after a short stay in Egypt. During his two-day stopover he met with Israel's political and economic leadership.[20] His two most important meetings were with Ben-Gurion and Sharett. Sharett outlined Israel's concept of peace and the key problems in the Arab-Israeli conflict; Ben-Gurion stressed the Soviet threat to the Middle East, Israel's role in regional defense, and Israel-Arab relations.

In Egypt Dulles had learned that the central issue was the evacuation of the British bases in the Canal Zone; Egyptian leaders did not accord high priority to the question of relations with Israel. He was impressed by Naguib and other members of the junta, but criticized their political shortsightedness in failing to accurately assess the dangers looming in the international arena. In Israel, Dulles explained that whereas the previous administration had been influenced by Jewish pressure-groups and overlooked the Arab point of view, President Eisenhower intended to enhance the Arabs' trust in the United States. Nevertheless, Dulles stated categorically that any U.S. administration would be committed to and sympathize with Israel.

After his return home, Dulles delivered a broadcast speech on 1 June to summarize his conclusions from his tour. This address incorporated several statements that corroborated Israel's fears of a new direction in Administration policy. Dulles spoke of the link to Jerusalem felt by religious groups the world over as a claim that preceded the political demands of Israel and Jordan. He spoke of resettling most of the refugees in Arab countries and some of them in areas under Israeli control. What concerned Israel in particular were several implications of his remarks: namely, that the United States had to alleviate the Arabs' deep resentment at the establishment of Israel and redress the pro-Israel policy of the previous Administration; and that, for the sake of peace, both sides would have to make concessions.[21]

Israeli anxieties intensified in the wake of several measures adopted by the Administration during July: the American reaction to the transfer of the Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem; the rejection of Israel's request for a loan of $75 million from the Export-Import Bank to cover short-term debts;[22] and the Administration's intention to provide military assistance to Arab countries.[23] Israel's representatives in the United States were instructed to take immediate action to alter the climate of opinion, which

20. See Nos. 207 and 209–212.
21. See No. 243.
22. See Nos. 279, 304, and 312.
23. See No. 284.

they did, even though some of them argued that the alarmed reaction in Israel was excessive.[24]

Certain events and developments during the last five months of 1953, which threatened to undermine the basis on which the new Administration was seeking to establish its relations with the Arab states, led to a hardening of its attitude towards Israel. The most significant signs of this deterioration were the deferment of the grant-in-aid as a response to the conflict with Syria and the UN on the project to divert the Jordan River, as well as the reaction to the Qibya operation. The grant was released after being frozen for about a month, however, and the Administration tried to play down the friction and persuade Israel's representatives that friendship for Israel was a fixture of U.S. foreign policy.[25] In retrospect, though, the course of bilateral relations in the following years confirms the claim that the first seeds of discord in Israel-U.S. relations were indeed sown during this period.

Relations between Israel and the Soviet Union

Relations between Israel and the Soviet Union deteriorated so far as a severing of diplomatic ties at the beginning of 1953. After several months, however, they were renewed; by the end of the year there had been a considerable improvement in bilateral relations.

A set of interlinked domestic and external factors determined the nature of the relations between the two countries: the global struggle between the Soviet Union and the United States and Israel's position vis-à-vis the two superpowers; Soviet interests in the Middle East and the Israel-Arab conflict; the Soviet regime's attitude towards the Jews of the U.S.S.R. and its antisemitic policies, as against Israel's concern for the fate of Soviet Jews and desire that they immigrate to Israel; the ideological conflict between Communism and Israeli democracy and Israel's affiliation with the Free World.

On 13 January 1953, it was announced that nine physicians, six of them Jews, had been arrested and charged with conspiring to kill Soviet leaders,[26] espionage, and maintaining ties with the Joint Distribution Committee and U.S. intelligence agencies. This lie was a direct continuation of the antisemitic, anti-Zionist, and anti-Israeli propaganda campaign that had accompanied the Prague trials of late 1952.[27] Unlike the Prague trials, during which the State of Israel was one of the targets, Israel's name was not mentioned in connection with the "Doctors' Plot." This omission influenced senior Foreign Ministry officials and the Prime Minister to avoid

24. See Nos. 316, 323, and 330.
25. See No. 422.
26. See No. 11.
27. See Vol. 7, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, p. 299.

any official government statement at first and await further developments.[28] The Israeli press, on the other hand—with the exception of *Al Hamishmar* and the Communist organ *Kol Ha'am*—reacted immediately and vehemently; their editorials highlighted the antisemitic nature of the trumped-up charges. Only *Kol Ha'am* accepted Moscow's version. A serious dilemma confronted the Israeli government. On the one hand, the antisemitic nature of the libel and the threat it posed to Soviet Jewry necessitated an unequivocal Jewish response. On the other hand, diplomatic relations between the two countries were correct. Moreover, the fact that Israel's name had not been linked to the Doctors' Plot required extreme circumspection and refraining from an ideological response or one that could be interpreted as Israeli interference in internal Soviet affairs. There was also a domestic problem: the response of the Israel Communist Party enraged most Israelis, and the Government had to decide how to handle it.

The fury triggered by the Doctors' Plot was shared by all Israeli policymakers, but they had different ideas as to how to react. Although there was a general consensus that the Knesset was the appropriate forum for voicing the official Israeli response, there was disagreement concerning its content. A Government meeting on the eve of the Knesset debate[29] focused on three issues: whether to declare publicly that Israel would raise at the UN the issue of incitement against the Jewish people and its organizations; whether to emphasize the right of Jews to emigrate from eastern Europe and the Soviet Union; and whether to make a public declaration that Communist activity in Israel was tantamount to incitement against the state and the Government intended to take action against it. Most cabinet ministers were opposed to mentioning the "fifth column" in the Government statement.[30] Some of them, including Moshe Shapira, who held the social welfare and religious affairs portfolios, tried to tone down the wording; others (including the minister of labor, Golda Meyerson, and Minister without Portfolio Pinhas Lavon) advocated an aggressive response and a clear reference to the issue of emigration from the Soviet Union. The Government decided to leave the phrasing of the statement to Foreign Minister Sharett.

The Government statement, delivered in the Knesset on 19 January, was sharp and to-the-point.[31] It testified to a certain change in official Israeli policy towards the Soviet Union—from the political restraint that had characterized the previous period to an open campaign against Soviet malevolence towards the Jews and even against the regime itself. It marked a new stage in the process of Israel's retreat from the policy of non-alignment. The statement linked the Doctors' Plot with the Prague trials and

28. See Nos. 15 and 17.

29. See No. 24.

30. For Ben-Gurion's opposition to this approach, see his letter to cabinet members, 20 January 1953, IDF archives, 532.73/164.

31. See No. 24.

termed it a fabrication meant to terrorize the Jews of the Soviet Union and eastern Europe. Israel would condemn the act at the UN and would not cease demanding implementation of Soviet Jewry's right to emigrate to Israel. The statement reflected the rage at the Soviet Union that swept Israel at the time; but Shmuel Eliashiv, the Israel minister to the U.S.S.R., thought it unnecessarily harsh. Eliashiv feared that this extreme response could lead to a severing of relations and warned his colleagues not to be dragged along in the wake of the public mood.[32] Sharett rejected Eliashiv's position and supported the idea raised by party and public institutions in Israel, including the Jewish Agency, to convene a world Jewish conference, under the slogan "Let My People Go," at which the Soviet persecution of the Jewish people in general and of Soviet Jewry in particular would be castigated. The Government adopted this idea; but fearing a hostile Soviet reaction if it were to be publicly identified with such anti-Soviet measures, it decided to settle for an observer's role only. The conference was intended to make world public opinion aware of the Kremlin's anti-Jewish policy, on the assumption that Moscow was not indifferent to this factor.[33]

In addition to the conference, the Government decided to raise the issue of the persecution of Jews in the Soviet Union at the United Nations, included with other topics rather than as a separate item on the agenda of the next session of the General Assembly.

On 9 February, at the height of the discussions about the appropriate reaction to the Doctors' Plot, a bomb exploded in the Soviet legation in Tel Aviv; the event cut short all the debates and confronted the Israeli Government with a new reality. In response to the bombing, on 11 February the Kremlin decided to sever diplomatic ties with Israel.[34] The decision was not retracted even after the Prime Minister's statement to the Knesset and Israeli letters of apology.[35] In the note announcing the breaking off of relations, the U.S.S.R. accused Israel of systematically fanning the flames of hatred and hostility towards the Soviet Union and of incitement to hostile acts against it. As proof of this accusation, the note cited anti-Soviet articles that had been published in the Israeli press and emphasized Sharett's speech in the Knesset, which "openly incited to hostile acts against the Soviet Union."

The decision to sever ties elicited shock in Israel and was seen as exceptional in the context of Soviet policy on relations with other countries. Israeli policymakers were hard put to assess precisely what had led the Soviet Union to such an action. The minister in Moscow, Shmuel Eliashiv, listed four factors that had influenced the Kremlin to take this extreme measure: (1) an incipient process of Soviet seclusion from the world; (2) the

32. See No. 43.
33. See No. 52 and nn. 1 and 2 there.
34. See Nos. 80 and 81.
35. See Nos. 71, 72, and 78.

Soviet rulers' desire to punish Israel; (3) Soviet displeasure at the existence of the Israeli legation in Moscow, which they considered to be a disruptive influence on Soviet Jews; (4) domestic problems that augured purges similar to those that had taken place in 1936–1937. Eliashiv pointed out that anti-Jewish propaganda had intensified in the Soviet press since the Prague Trials, and articles describing Zionism as the enemy of the Soviet people had proliferated.[36] People in Israel were inclined to adopt Eliashiv's assessment and ascribe the break in relations to the basic Soviet animosity towards Zionism.

The left-wing parties (the Israel Communist Party and Mapam) claimed, however, that the break in relations was an understandable Soviet response to the change in Israel's policy of non-alignment and its courting of the West. They even went so far as to say that the Government's response to the Doctors' Plot was not sufficiently restrained or controlled.[37]

The break in relations did not last long. Stalin's death on 5 March ushered in a new era in the Soviet Union. The reshuffling of senior officials and changes in the organization of party institutions attested to a changeover from a one-man regime to a collective leadership with more democratization. One manifestation of this process was the announcement by the Soviet government, on 4 April, that the doctors had been exonerated and released from jail.[38] In its reaction, published the same day, Israel expressed satisfaction with the Soviet statement and hope that the anti-Jewish campaign against the Joint Distribution Committee and the World Zionist Organization would cease. The Government communiqué noted that the allegations against the doctors had laid the foundation for an anti-Jewish campaign, one facet of which was the severance of diplomatic relations with Israel. It expressed the hope that the situation would be remedied by a halt to this campaign and emphasized Israel's wish to renew full and normal relations with the Soviet Union.[39] Israel was thereby opening the door for a renewal of ties and hoping that the Kremlin would take the next step.

But this was not to be. The Soviet Union did not take a direct initiative of its own, but sent hints via the ambassadors of eastern European countries in Sofia.[40] The first step was the personal initiative of Ben-Zion Razin, the first secretary in the Israel legation in Sofia, who in early April raised the question of renewed relations with the Soviet Union in a meeting with the Polish ambassador to Bulgaria.[41] Negotiations continued for more than two months, chiefly in Sofia, at first via the Polish ambassador and later directly with the Soviet ambassador.

36. Eliashiv to the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, 3 March 1953.
37. See Yosef Govrin, *Israel-Soviet Relations,* pp. 30–39.
38. See No. 154.
39. See No. 156.
40. See No. 168.
41. See No. 183; cf. M. Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. 1, pp. 64–79.

On 28 May, Israel's representatives in Sofia were invited to meet with the Soviet ambassador in Bulgaria. There they set forth the Israeli government's favorable attitude towards a resumption of relations. In another meeting, on 2 June, the ambassador read them a note from the Soviet government, expressing its willingness to consider Israel's request for renewing relations and setting two preconditions: apprehension of the perpetrators of the legation bombing and a promise that the Government of Israel "refrain from participation in alliances and agreements directed against the Soviet Union."[42]

Israel replied that it had taken steps to track down the perpetrators of the Tel Aviv bombing and emphasized that it had no military pact with any other power and no intention of concluding or adhering to any such pact. It added that it had never agreed and would never agree to support preparation or implementation of acts of aggression against the Soviet Union or any other peace-loving country.[43] The Israeli reply did not satisfy the Soviets. They expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that Israel had not yet found the culprits in the bombing incident and requested a clearer and more precise phrasing of Israel's promise not to join anti-Soviet pacts and agreements. They also requested that the letter announcing the renewal of ties explicitly state that it was Israel that had initiated the process.[44]

Only after repeated meetings and discussions with the Soviet ambassador in Sofia did the parties reach agreement on the wording of the notes to be exchanged on the resumption of relations.[45] Sharett sent his note to the Soviet foreign minister, Vyacheslav Molotov, on 6 July; the latter replied on 15 July. On 20 July, a communiqué was published in Jerusalem and Moscow on the resumption of relations and the exchange of notes between the two countries.[46] In effect, Israel met the Soviet demands: it explicitly declared that it would not be party to any pact or agreement directed against the Soviet Union and that it had initiated the process to renew relations. Nevertheless, the Soviets also went a little way towards meeting Israel and agreed to include a paragraph in their note to the effect that the Soviet government would aspire to maintain friendly relations with Israel.

After the renewal of relations, a more relaxed atmosphere prevailed between the two countries; in Israel there was even cautious optimism concerning Soviet objectives. This attitude, which was reflected in the discussion of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, gained strength after a speech delivered by the new Soviet prime minister, Malenkov, on 8 August, in which he outlined his country's foreign-policy guidelines. Malenkov mentioned the resumption of relations with Israel,

42. See Nos. 236, 245, and 246.
43. See Nos. 249 and 250.
44. See Nos. 268 and 269.
45. See Nos. 277, 282, and 287.
46. See Nos. 288, 297, and 298.

noted Israel's commitment not to join anti-Soviet pacts, and expressed hope for closer cooperation between the two countries. In late 1953, negotiations were conducted about the sale of Israeli citrus fruit to the Soviet Union and the purchase of heavy and crude oil from the Soviet Union.[47]

In two vital areas, however, Israel registered serious disappointment. Israel interpreted the thaw in relations as an opportunity to raise the question of emigration from the Soviet Union. In his first meeting with the Soviet deputy foreign minister, Andrei Gromyko (21 December), Eliashiv raised the question of emigration in a clear and decisive manner. Gromyko's reaction was categorically negative and left no room for equivocation.[48] Israel suffered another blow in an equally vital area. In the Security Council debate on the Jordan River diversion project, the Soviet Union adopted an active anti-Israel stand—for the first time since the start of the Israel-Arab conflict; in January 1954 it went so far as to veto the Council's resolution on the issue.[49]

The veto was unexpected. In practice, 1953 ended with hope in Israel for a continuation of the congenial atmosphere in relations with the Soviet Union, despite the disappointing response on the question of emigration.

Israel-Syria Relations: High-Level Talks on Partition of the Demilitarized Zones

It was a year of ups and downs in Israel-Syria relations. At the start of 1953, representatives of the two countries met for talks aimed at reaching an accord to partition the demilitarized zones; at year's end, Syria and Israel found themselves locked in a tense confrontation over Israeli plans to divert the Jordan River.

During the first five months of the year, Israeli and Syrian representatives, seconded by UN mediators, met nine times in an attempt to reach an agreement to partition the demilitarized zones between them. The initiative for the talks, begun in 1952, came from Syria, which was interested in stabilizing the arrangements and actual control of the demilitarized zones by dividing them up. The two sides disagreed on the context of the talks. Israel insisted that any agreement emerging from the negotiations should be considered an element in an overall peace accord or, failing that, at least as an article in a non-aggression pact. At the very least, the two sides should view it as a step towards a peace settlement. The Syrians, by contrast, wanted to play down the importance and objective of the talks and conduct them in the framework of the existing armistice agreement. After the first meeting (9 October 1952) and in the wake of internal consultations, Israel decided to accept the Syrian approach. Consequently, the

47. See No. 528.
48. See Nos. 595 and 599.
49. See No. 620 and No. 621, nn. 4 and 5.

meetings were held in the context of the mixed armistice commission and under UN auspices.[50]

United Nations representatives participated in all the meetings, which alternated between Rosh Pinna and the Syrian customs house near the Benot Yaaqov Bridge. The U.S. Administration gave its full backing to these talks.[51] In addition to the official negotiations, there were also a number of off-the-record meetings. Since no joint reports were drawn up on the official talks, the documents included in this volume derive exclusively from the Israeli participants.

The negotiations went through five main stages, accompanied by progress and setbacks:

(1) At the first four sessions (15, 19, and 22 January; 2 February),[52] the parties presented their basic positions, defined the parameters of the discussion, and began talks about redrawing the armistice line and the attendant problems. During these four meetings, significant gaps manifested themselves between the Israeli and Syrian approaches; all attempts to bridge them failed. This stage ended in stalemate.

(2) The second stage was that of crisis in the talks and UN mediation (February 1953), during which the UN representatives met separately with the parties, got them to make their positions somewhat more flexible, and arranged a resumption of the talks.[53] The U.S. ambassador in Israel, Monnett Davis, also intervened. He called on Sharett to show flexibility and make an even greater effort to achieve a settlement with Syria.[54]

(3) The third stage comprised the sessions of 10 and 16 March and 13 April.[55] In this stage, some progress was achieved and the parties even agreed on several points.[56]

(4) In the wake of this progress, the Government discussed the results and ratified the agreements reached with Syria. However, it put forward several new conditions and asked for clarifications, especially on the water issue.[57]

(5) The new Israeli demands complicated the talks when they resumed. At the last two meetings (4 and 27 May),[58] the Syrians rejected Israel's new conditions. The talks were adjourned without an agreement.

The negotiations focused on the attempt to eliminate the demilitarized zone and partition it between the two countries. The demilitarized zone

50. See Vol. 7, Nos. 245, 384, 413, 424, and 470.
51. See, for example, *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1), Nos. 509, 521, 539, and 586.
52. See Nos. 19, 23, 30, and 53.
53. See No. 73.
54. See No. 85.
55. See Nos. 134, 136, and 169.
56. See No. 169, n. 5; see also A. Shalev, *Cooperation under the Shadow of Confrontation.* pp. 392–393.
57. See No. 190 and n. 1 there.
58. See Nos. 195 and 234.

was divided into three sections: northern, in the Banias area; central, around Lake Hula and Mishmar Hayarden; and southern, from Nuqeib to al-Hamma. The parties endeavored to demarcate a new armistice line in the three sectors and deal with issues such as the use of water sources, fishing rights, and compensation for land.

With regard to the central sector, the parties fluctuated between flexibility and obstinacy. At first the Syrians demanded that the line bisect Lake Hula, the Sea of Galilee, and the Jordan River. Later they agreed that the border could run east of the three, and the only issue was how far from the water line. The Syrians demanded that the border coincide with the shore, while Israel demanded preservation of the status quo, with the line running ten meters east of the water line. Israel was chiefly opposed to any change in the ten-meter strip along the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee—a sector that was not included in the demilitarized zone and was outside the scope of the discussions. In the course of the talks, however, Israel's representatives compromised and accepted the Syrian proposal that the new border run only one meter east of the water line northeast of the Sea of Galilee and east of the Jordan River.

With regard to the northern and southern sectors, a serious argument arose as to the principle on which partition should be based: who had a better claim to the land—those who held title to the land or those who actually worked it? Israel asserted that the new line should reflect who worked the land; on this basis it agreed to give up the Arab villages of Tawafiq and Nuqeib, and the al-Hamma salient. The border proposed by Israel left about 70% of the southern sector in its hands. The Syrians, for their part, argued that ownership should be the key; on this basis they drew a line that left about half of the southern sector in their control.[59]

Two new issues that arose during the discussion of a new armistice line deepened the rift between the parties: fishing rights and water use. The Syrians demanded fishing rights for those who would be forced to leave their villages as a result of an agreement and those who would no longer have access to the Sea of Galilee; the latter category included the residents of the village of Tawafiq, for whose benefit the Syrians demanded an access corridor to the Sea of Galilee near the village of Samra.[60] The Syrians went further and demanded vested and natural fishing rights for Arab fishermen in the Sea of Galilee, whereas Israel stood firm on its right to limit fishing in the Sea of Galilee and grant rights only to a limited and fixed number of fishermen, by special permit.

On the issue of irrigation and water use, Israel agreed to allocate fixed quotas to Arab farmers who would lose water sources as a result of an agreement or of the Jordan River diversion project. It rejected the Syrian

59. See No. 49; Shalev, *Cooperation under the Shadow of Confrontation*, pp. 392–393.
60. See No. 169; see also Yitzhak Moda'i, "Report on Meeting," 5 March 1953, 130.02/2343/3.

demand that these quotas be increased beyond the amount the farmers had used in the past.

Despite the mutual concessions and the congenial atmosphere, the parties did not reach an agreement. After the ninth session, the negotiations were suspended. Within a few months the two countries were once again at loggerheads over Israel's efforts to divert the Jordan River.

The documents included in this volume directly refer to only some of the reasons that led to the failure of the talks, while alluding to several others. For example, we learn that Foreign Ministry officials and to some extent Foreign Minister Sharett himself objected to the military's willingness to concede several areas to the Syrians, such as Tawafiq, Dardara, and the al-Hamma salient.[61] They were wary of creating a precedent and of a domestic outcry against yielding territory under Israeli control. One senior official expressed his colleagues' position as follows: "We are giving up important cards and augmenting the other side's greed."[62] Sharett hesitated; evidently it took a *tête-à-tête* with Ben-Gurion to persuade him that no settlement was possible without relinquishing territory. In any case, when he presented the subject to the cabinet and to his associates in the Foreign Ministry he stressed the fact that Israel had much to gain and little to lose through the agreement.[63]

Sharett justified the concessions by saying that Israel in any case did not control some of these areas it would be renouncing and would not lose anything by the sham concession required. On the other hand, the accord would confer an element of permanent ownership of the areas left in its hands. He added that the agreement would give Israel freedom of action to implement a national water plan and mentioned the importance of conducting negotiations with Syria, with U.S. encouragement, during a period of political stalemate on all other fronts. Among the disadvantages he cited the fact that the armistice line would run along the water line and the need to grant fishing rights to Arab fishermen. Nevertheless, balancing the pluses and minuses, he stated categorically that even if the negotiations failed, Israel must not be viewed as the party that caused suspension of the negotiations with the Arabs.

The reservations expressed in the Foreign Ministry reflected certain ideas that were incorporated into the Government's resolution on the subject.[64] That resolution also took into account the misgivings of Simcha Blass, Israel's water expert, about an agreement that might have an adverse impact on Israel's water plans. The Government decision seemingly ratified the understandings reached with Syria, but advanced new demands de-

61. See No. 34.
62. See Nos. 49 and 91.
63. See Nos. 38, 49, and 91.
64. See No. 190, n. 1.

signed to safeguard Israel's water projects.[65] When the Syrians rejected these new conditions, the talks deteriorated into stalemate and were broken off.

Several considerations governed the Syrians' willingness to negotiate with Israel. They realized that Israel effectively controlled some of the demilitarized zone; hence it was preferable to try to limit it by an agreement that would expand the Syrian sector. Because Syria was then negotiating with the United States on financial aid, these meetings were meant to persuade the Administration that Syria was truly interested in peace with Israel. In the talks, Syria also sought to insure its control of the al-Hamma salient, where it planned to build a power station with American assistance, as part of the Yarmuk project.[66] But the Syrians, like the Israelis, had conditions for an accord and were not prepared to accept a settlement at any price. Hence when Israel returned to the talks with new demands, Syrian withdrew from the whole process. It may be that both parties' willingness to negotiate was nothing more than a tactical measure to further their own interests: the Syrians, to display good will vis-à-vis the Americans; the Israelis, to permit implementation of the Jordan River diversion project.

Despite the failure of the talks, they were significant in the context of the evolution of relations between Israel and its neighbors since 1953. The documents reveal that statesmen and military leaders on both sides were willing to be flexible and find practical solutions to the problems that divided them. This flexibility did not, however, transcend the overall national goals of each side,[67] as was soon demonstrated by the conflict that erupted before the end of the year over the Israeli project to divert the Jordan River.

The Jordanian Border: Tension and Reprisal Raids

The Political Aspects and the Domestic Debate

Tension along the Jordanian border heightened in 1953. During the course of the year there was an increase in the number of infiltration incidents that ended in the killing of Israeli citizens, and a consequent increase in Israeli reprisal raids. This led to a gradual deterioration in the relationship between the two countries and culminated in the Qibya operation in October.

Attempts to defuse the border conflict through the local commanders' agreement, signed and renewed several times in 1952, were not successful in 1953. In January, Israel announced that the agreement was invalid because Jordan had not adhered to its terms; shortly thereafter the IDF staged two

65. See S. Blass, *Water in Strife and Action*, pp. 247–248; see also Nos. 195 and 245.
66. See No. 203.
67. See Shalev, *Cooperation under the Shadow of Confrontation*, p. 253.

forays across the border.[68] The string of border incidents that peaked with the Qibya operation involved Arab infiltration of Israeli border settlements, sometimes causing civilian deaths, sometimes only theft, mining, and attacks on transportation arteries, followed by reprisal raids by the IDF, most of which were unsuccessful from the military point of view but inflicted casualties and property damage in Arab villages on the Jordanian side of the border.[69] All of this made the Western powers, particularly the United States and Great Britain, anxious. They urged Israel to curb its responses and sometimes explicitly condemned the IDF raids.[70] The Americans pressured Israel to renew the commanders' agreement. Israel had lost faith in the effectiveness of this agreement, however, and preferred to iron out the difficulties in high-level meetings with Jordanian officials. Such meetings were held on 29 June and 21 July but did not produce any real change in the situation.

The question of an appropriate response to infiltration had preoccupied senior political and security echelons in Israel since 1951, but the domestic debate intensified during 1953: should Israel retaliate militarily whenever Israeli civilians were killed? Were the inhabitants of the villages from which infiltrators set out legitimate targets, or only members of the Jordanian National Guard? Should other, more extreme methods of retaliation be considered, such as the occupation of some Jordanian territory, or merely confiscating property? Finally, should Israel opt for restraint and forbearance between one incident and the next and take advantage of the good offices of the representatives of the Powers to encourage the Jordanians to prevent infiltration? The issue was debated in several high-level forums: the Government, the Foreign and Defense ministries, the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, the ranking organs of the Mapai party, and in various groupings of senior political and military personnel.

The view of the IDF and the security establishment was that, in the existing circumstances, attacks on Arab border residents were the most effective way of preventing infiltration and should be employed whenever infiltrators went too far in their acts of murder and attacks on transportation arteries or whenever Israelis' sense of security was seriously undermined. The assumption informing this attitude was that the Jordanian government was responsible for preventing infiltration and had the ability to do so. All agreed that the Jordanian government bore overall responsibility for the situation, although military and security personnel in Israel knew that at least some of the infiltration and terrorism stemmed from the economic distress of refugees living near the border. Reprisals were intended first and foremost to pressure the Jordanian authorities to take action to prevent

68. See No. 46, n. 1.

69. See B. Morris, *Israel's Border Wars*, pp. 210–216 and 221–226; see also *Carta's Atlas of Israel: The First Years, 1948–1961* (Jerusalem, 1978), pp. 96–97 (Hebrew).

70. See, for example, Nos. 46 and 51.

infiltration and persuade the residents of the border districts that such actions brought them no benefit and much damage. In addition to this main goal, however, there were other, subsidiary objectives, such as strengthening the IDF, giving it battle experience, and bolstering morale in Israeli border settlements. Senior defense personnel advocated retaliation even if this invited diplomatic pressure from foreign countries. Some ministers, some members of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, and some high-ranking politicians accepted and adopted this attitude.

Opposing this hard-line stand were Foreign Minister Sharett, most senior officials in his ministry, and some cabinet ministers, members of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, and politicians. They did not totally rule out reprisal raids as a means to deter infiltration, but insisted that it be used in a controlled manner and that all diplomatic expedients be exhausted and the political implications weighed prior to any military operation. There were even a few who were fundamentally opposed to the idea of military retaliation, including the director-general of the Foreign Ministry, Walter Eytan, who rejected the strong-arm policy and advocated that other methods of self-defense be considered.[71]

Several times during the year, the Government was asked to decide on the character and timing of military retaliation. There were cabinet debates after the most serious incidents: in February, after the mining of the railroad tracks near Qalqiliya; in May, after shooting at cars on the Jerusalem–Tel Aviv highway and at an Israel Railways train; and in June, after the killing of several civilians in a number of incidents during a single week.[72] In some of these discussions, Ben-Gurion moved that the Government authorize large-scale large retaliatory action; once he proposed occupying territory on the other side of the border, such as the town of Tulkarm or the Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah, and holding on to it until the Jordanians promised that the terrorism would end.[73] Among the justifications Ben-Gurion adduced for his proposal were the panic prevailing in the border settlements and the low morale of the army. He stated categorically that, when Israel's security was at stake, the Western powers and the extent of their friendship for Israel should not be taken into account.

In every debate that culminated in a decision, Ben-Gurion and Sharett found themselves on opposing sides of the question. The Foreign Minister always tried to delay a military response and demanded that all political measures be exhausted first, while Ben-Gurion pressed for military action. Both found support for their positions among the other ministers. On several occasions, decisions were taken by a single vote, and the phrasing of the resolution attempted to reflect both approaches. Thus, for example, at the cabinet session of 2 February it was decided, by a vote of 7–6, to refrain

71. See Nos. 50 and 132.
72. See Nos. 54, 224, and 265.
73. See Nos. 59 and 228.

from a military reaction for the time being and settle for a declaration to the representatives of the Western powers and the UN that the IDF would respond to any serious hostile act against Israel; it was also resolved, however, that the Defense Minister (Ben-Gurion) would determine the type of retaliatory action. Ben-Gurion rejected the demand that any decision to take military action be preceded by a cabinet debate.[74] Several days later Sharett sent a note to the representative of the Western Powers concerning Jordan's responsibility for attacks against Israel and the country's right to take measures in self-defense if the Jordanians did not recognize their responsibility for the situation and demonstrate their ability to control it.[75] Nevertheless, the Government's mandate to the Defense Minister enabled him to dispatch the IDF on a cross-border raid in mid-May, after infiltration incidents that ended in the murder of Israeli civilians intensified. This operation led to Jordanian civilian casualties and sparked a British protest.[76] In the second half of May, there were two nocturnal shooting incidents on the Jerusalem–Tel Aviv highway. Ben-Gurion interpreted this as an act of belligerency and proposed that the Government authorize the occupation of territory across the border. He even contemplated the possibility of full-scale hostilities between Jordan and Israel. Most cabinet members, headed by Sharett, were leery about the idea of war and demanded that no military action be undertaken until the matter was brought before the Government for further study. Ben-Gurion accepted their position; a Government meeting held a week later accepted Sharett's proposal that diplomatic activity to remedy the situation must be essayed before military action was authorized.[77]

Tangible evidence of the real possibility of war between Jordan and Israel, if the reprisals intensified, is provided by the course of a meeting of senior Foreign Ministry officials and IDF officers held at Sharett's home on 5 June.[78] The Chief of Staff, who supported military action even if it increased the likelihood of war, told those present that another war was bound to break out between Israel and its neighbors sooner or later; it was better to preempt it than wait for the Arabs to amass power and weapons. Sharett, on the other hand, explained that the Government was opposed to any measure that might lead to overt hostilities.

The ink was scarcely dry on a new local commanders' agreement with Jordan, signed on 8 June, when a serious incident cost the lives of Israeli civilians. The Government convened on June 11 for an emergency debate to consider the Israeli response.[79] Once again Ben-Gurion sought approval

74. See No. 59.
75. See Nos. 61 and 62.
76. See File No. 130.02/2402/2 and Nos. 226 and 240.
77. See Nos. 220, 228, and 242.
78. IDF archives, 230/72/897.
79. See Nos. 256, 265, 261, and 262.

for reprisal raids against villages near the Israeli localities that had been attacked, without taking the Powers' reactions into account. Sharett, true to form, demanded that now, too, the political process be exhausted first; he admitted that the incidents were very serious indeed but nevertheless demanded restraint to give both sides time to implement the provisions of the commanders' agreement. Most ministers supported waiting several days so that Sharett could try the diplomatic track. All the same, the Government voted 9–2 to empower the Prime Minister to order military retaliation if acts of infiltration and murder recurred after a week had elapsed.

Thus a further chance was given to diplomacy. The Israeli ambassadors in London and Washington met with senior Foreign Office and State Department officials, apprised them of the seriousness of the situation, and informed them that Israel could not refrain from reprisals if infiltration continued. Great Britain and the United States were asked to pressure Jordan to prevent infiltration.[80] The failure of the high-level meeting between Israeli and Jordanian representatives (29 June) did not make Sharett's task any easier. In the view of the defense establishment, the political process had failed. When infiltration and murders continued throughout the summer they decided to retaliate. On 12 August, IDF units struck across the southwestern quadrant of the border, attacking several Jordanian villages and killing a number of civilians. The military did not consider the operation to have been particularly successful, and this military failure worried them. There was also a painful international backlash. In keeping with their familiar routine, the Western powers lost no time in protesting the Israeli action; they condemned the reprisal and demanded that Israel forgo this policy in the future.[81]

The Qibya Operation

The policy of reprisal raids peaked in the Qibya operation in October 1953. The murder of a mother and her two children in the village of Yehud, on the night of 13 October, was the immediate trigger for the raid. The next night, a special IDF unit that had been set up during the summer of 1953 (Unit 101) attacked Qibya and three neighboring villages. In the course of the operation, IDF soldiers blew up several houses in the villages; various accounts gave the number of civilian dead as from 42 to 56 men, women and children.[82] The decision to stage the raid was taken by the military-security echelons; the full cabinet was not convened to authorize it. The decision-makers relied on the authority granted them by the Government on 11 June. Sharett was informed of the military decision and did

80. See Nos. 262, 264, 271, and 272.
81. See Nos. 352, 353, and 357.
82. See No. 426.

not oppose it at first. However, after he learned that the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission had condemned the murders in Yehud, that the Jordanian representative on the commission had voiced his revulsion at the deed, that the Jordanian authorities had agreed that Israeli forces could operate in Jordanian territory to track down the perpetrators, and that the commander of the Arab Legion had asked Israel to refrain from reprisals, Sharett asked Pinhas Lavon, the acting defense minister, to cancel the planned Israeli military response. Lavon later maintained that he contacted Ben-Gurion (who was on vacation at the time), who approved the raid.[83]

The IDF operation in Qibya sparked furious reactions in Israel and abroad. Israel's representatives in Washington and New York were inundated by a wave of condemnation and criticism of Israeli policy. They, too, were appalled by the results of the raid and could not refrain from criticizing it.[84] Israel has committed "an act it cannot be proud of and that cannot be excused even by Arab crimes that preceded it," wrote Eban. MK David Hacohen wrote to Sharett that the action "literally freezes my blood. . . . My world has grown dark." Their criticism of the operation did not keep Israeli representatives abroad from doing their job; they all did their part to curb the diplomatic assault against Israel. Eban believed that Israel should adopt a candid position and broaden the scope of its argument to embrace the entire issue of infiltration from Jordan. He added that it was vital to decide how to present the incident—as morally acceptable and justified, or as the result of a loss of patience on the part of residents of the frontier district after long months of cruel provocation? MK Herzl Berger wrote the Foreign Minister and his colleagues in the Mapai party that it was essential to declare that the Qibya operation had been carried out without full Government authorization and did not reflect its policy.

The international reaction was immediate. The criticism voiced by the representatives of the United States and Great Britain was particularly scathing. The first to react were the British, who, in a note to the Foreign Minister, expressed their shock at the action and noted that it imperiled regional peace.[85] They reminded Israel of Britain's obligations under the terms of its pact with Jordan. The British demanded that Israel investigate the circumstances of the incident, pay compensation to its victims, and withdraw the IDF from the border area. They warned that, should the situation deteriorate further, Britain might activate its defense pact with Jordan.[86]

On 18 October, the State Department issued a press communiqué that expressed profound sympathy for the victims and stressed the need to

83. See No. 425 and nn. 3 and 4 there; see also Sharett, *Personal Diary*, pp. 34–47; cf. also No. 464.

84. See Nos. 432, 435, and 439.

85. See No. 433 and Sharett's reply in No. 461.

86. See Nos. 434, 479, 489, 495, and 505.

bring those responsible to justice and prevent similar incidents in the future.[87] The American reaction was interpreted in Israel as an element in the broader constellation of bilateral relations, against the backdrop of the controversy over the Jordan River diversion project. It was only after the Qibya operation that Secretary of State Dulles publicly announced the Administration's decision to defer the grant-in-aid to Israel. Even though the communiqué avoided making a direct linkage between Qibya and deferment of the grant, its timing could not avoid creating precisely that impression.

The French, like the British, sent a protest note to Israel, but less sharply worded. Their overall reaction to the incident was less severe than that of their allies.[88]

The three Western Powers, whose foreign ministers happened to be conferring in London, expressed their horror at the incident. On 17 October they called for an emergency session of the Security Council to discuss the escalation of tension between Israel and its neighbors.

Israeli policymakers in Jerusalem and Washington concurred unanimously that, as a starter, the Powers' one-sided approach—criticism of the Israeli raid but no mention of the events that had led to it—must be confronted head-on. They were divided, however, as to whether Israel should admit that the IDF had carried out the operation, confess that an error had been committed, and express regret at the outcome.

The Government convened on 18 October with Ben-Gurion, who resumed his duties after a protracted three-month vacation, presiding, and with the participation of the Chief of Staff. The discussion centered on a suspension of the work at the Benot Yaaqov Bridge and the Qibya operation. Sharett proposed that the Government order a temporary cessation of work at Benot Yaaqov. He also maintained that it should issue a public statement on the Qibya operation, expressing regret for the action and its results. Ben-Gurion was of the opinion that Israel should not admit that the IDF had carried out the operation; he proposed issuing a statement that residents of the border district, having lost patience with the situation, had conducted the raid.

Some ministers criticized the operation, expressed regret that appropriate measures to prevent civilian fatalities had not been adopted, and complained that the Government had not been consulted prior to the decision to undertake such a large-scale operation. They favored a public expression of regret. Other ministers were less troubled by the operation and its results. The majority supported Ben-Gurion's stand against a public admission of IDF involvement in the operation. It was decided that the Prime Minister would draft a statement on behalf of the Government. In a radio broadcast on 19 October, Ben-Gurion delivered Israel's version of the

87. See No. 451, n. 1.
88. See Nos. 447, 448, and 471.

Qibya incident. He denied IDF involvement in the operation and maintained that no IDF units had been absent from their base on the night of the raid. He assigned responsibility for the incident to residents of the border settlements, whose patience had run out, and added that the Government of Israel regretted that innocent persons had been wounded and killed during the operation.[89]

After publication of the Government statement, diplomatic activity in Washington and London focused on the effort to moderate the impending Security Council resolution and prevent a condemnation of Israel, or, if this was impossible, at least to have condemnation accompanied by a condemnation of infiltration and a call for peace.[90] The information efforts and intensive activities were not very successful. Eban gradually came to the realization that the Security Council would condemn the IDF operation but not infiltration. In a last attempt to avert the anticipated condemnation, he proposed to the Council that Israel and Jordan meet at UN headquarters to discuss the armistice arrangements and ways of preventing border incidents. The Jordanians rejected Eban's proposal as well as his call to the Security Council to invite the signatories to the armistice agreements to begin negotiations to convert them into permanent peace accords. The Israeli delegation to the UN, undeterred by the Jordanian rejection, came up with idea of asking the UN secretary-general to convene an Israel-Jordan conference under Article XII of the armistice agreement. The assumption was that Jordan would rebuff the proposal, handing Israel important propaganda points. Sharett and Ben-Gurion supported the proposal; on 23 November Eban submitted a note to this effect to the UN secretary-general and members of the Security Council.[91] The previous day, Ben-Gurion had made one last attempt to influence the Security Council's resolution: with the approval of the Government he issued a personal statement accusing the Powers of a double standard, condoning the murders perpetrated before Qibya and even encouraging future bloodshed. He asserted that Great Britain bore responsibility for events in Jordan and expressed astonishment that the Powers were not calling for peace between the parties. The Prime Minister again regretted the shedding of innocent blood anywhere and added that Israel would continue to take all necessary measures to ensure that "Israeli blood, too, shall not be cheap."[92]

On 24 November, the Security Council adopted a resolution condemning Israel for the Qibya operation and calling on it to refrain from such actions in the future. It called on Jordan to continue consolidating the measures it had adopted to prevent infiltration and appealed to both sides to refrain from violence. The resolution noted Israel's proposal for a con-

89. See No. 449.
90. See Nos. 479, 489, 490, and 495.
91. See Nos. 531 and 557.
92. See No. 525.

ference in accordance with Article XII of the armistice agreement but did not require that one be convened.

Immediately after passage of the resolution, Eban and his staff began to flesh out their proposal by preparing an agenda and working plan for the proposed conference. The senior echelons of the IDF had reservations about the plan and poured cold water on it, however. Ranking officers viewed it as a complicated idea that could only harm Israel. Eban and Gideon Rafael, who bore the brunt of the hostile reaction to the Qibya operation at the UN and in Washington, became somewhat impatient, feeling that the significance of their efforts and the importance of their proposal were not appreciated in Israel. Both of them stressed the baneful impact of the Qibya operation on Israel's international image and standing: "Israel has turned into a monster overnight," wrote Rafael; Eban told his colleagues that the incident had damaged Israel's status and brought it to the brink of disaster. They complained that there was a lack of understanding in Israel about the importance of the diplomatic struggle and of its connection with Israel's security, and emphasized that their proposal was meant to contain the damage wreaked on Israel's standing by the Qibya incident. Sharett, who sympathized with their distress, asked them to postpone discussions with the senior echelons of the IDF until after Rafael returned to Israel. Eban and Rafael did not let up, however.[93] In the end, action was delayed because the UN secretary-general decided to wait until after the Arab League meeting in January 1954 for the Jordanians' reply. As a result, the idea never got off the ground. The forceful reaction by Eban and Rafael was indicative of the tensions of diplomatic activity and the pressure they were under in Washington and New York after the Qibya operation. It also reflected the conflict of opinion between diplomats and IDF officers, which had been a fixture of Israel foreign-policy decision-making procedures since independence.

The Jordan River Diversion Project and its Effect on Israel's Relations with the United States, Syria, and the United Nations

In early September 1953, Israel began to implement the first stage of its plan to divert water from the Jordan River to the Negev. The initial objective was to dig a 2½-kilometer canal, beginning south of the Benot Yaaqov bridge, to carry water to the Sea of Galilee and exploit the difference in elevation to generate electricity.

The work began on Jewish-owned land in the demilitarized zone. On the surface, Israel took all the required diplomatic measures to prevent friction with the Syrians and the United Nations. It provided the UNTSO chief of staff with advance notice of its intention to carry out work; shortly before the start of excavation it obtained the written consent of the chairman of

93. See Nos. 539, 541, and 544; No. 563; No. 567 and n. 5 there; No. 574.

the armistice commission, Lt.-Col. Roy Tillotson.[94] Israel expected that Syria, preoccupied with domestic problems, would refrain from military intervention. Despite all their planning and precautionary measures, however, Israeli policymakers failed to anticipate the reactions of the United Nations and the United States and their aid and encouragement to Syria during the course of the dispute.

For four months, this imbroglio was at the center of Israeli diplomatic activity in Washington, New York, and Jerusalem. It engendered tension with the United States that peaked with the public announcement of the deferment of the grant-in-aid funds.

As already noted, Israel began work one kilometer south of the Benot Yaaqov Bridge under the assumption that the UN observers in Israel had given their consent, on condition that work not be carried out on Arab-owned land and that the Arab water rights be guaranteed. Shortly after the work began, however, Israel discovered that the agreement of the chairman of the Israel-Syria Mixed Armistice Commission had been tendered without the knowledge of the new UNTSO chief of staff, Maj.-Gen. Vagn Bennike of Denmark. This marked the beginning of a lengthy series of deliberations with the UN representatives concerning Israel's right to carry out the work, in parallel with intensive consultations with U.S. diplomats in Israel and the State Department.

The roots of the American opposition to the Israeli project lay in a regional plan for exploiting the water of the Jordan and Yarmuk Rivers, then being drafted in the United States at the request of UNRWA and under the guidance of the Tennessee Valley Authority.[95] Despite this UN parentage, it was in fact an American project designed in part to help the United States buttress its standing in the region. The fact that Israel had begun a project to divert the Jordan River without American involvement was interpreted by the State Department as an Israeli challenge to American policy.

Several stages can be discerned in the evolution of the conflict over the Jordan diversion project: (1) from the beginning of work until the American decision to defer the grant-in-aid (18 September); (2) from Bennike's ruling that work must stop (23 September) until the submission of the Syrian complaint to the Security Council (16 October); (3) from the Qibya incident (14 October) until the State Department made public the deferment of the grant-in-aid (20 October); (4) from that date until Eban's announcement that work had been suspended (27 October).

The State Department's reaction to the inauguration of work at the Benot Yaaqov Bridge was swift and decisive. Officials recommended a deferral of the release of grant-in-aid funds to Israel. The President approved the recommendation, which was also supported by the U.S. chargé

94. See No. 329 and No. 366 and nn. 2–5 there.

95. See No. 452, n. 2.

d'affaires in Tel Aviv.[96] Israel was informed of the deferment on 18 September by Assistant Secretary of State Henry Byroade, who said that it was justified by intelligence reports concerning the likelihood of armed conflict between Israel and Syria because of the Jordan diversion project. He added that the State Department was waiting for a report from Bennike before deciding on future steps. Indeed, throughout the crisis American responses were clearly affected by Bennike's decisions.

On 23 September, Bennike wrote Sharett, requesting that Israel cease work on the project until an agreement was reached on the disputed issues. He stated that he had ascertained that Israel had indeed begun work only on Jewish-owned land, but he had not completed his inquiries to determine whether work was not also being carried out on Arab-owned land without the landowners' consent. He further asserted that the work affected the water rights of Arabs in the area and conferred strategic advantages on Israel, thereby violating the armistice agreement. The Foreign Minister replied the next day, informing Bennike that Israel could not comply with his request to cease work and refuting his arguments one by one. Nevertheless, Sharett did not rule out discussion of the issues raised in the letter. Bennike rejected Israel's reply and again demanded an indefinite suspension of work, in order to facilitate discussion of the disputed points. The State Department, too, demanded that work cease.[97] It argued that Israel's conduct evinced a lack of consideration for its friends and was establishing facts on the ground that made it difficult to support it. Israel demurred at Bennike's approach and criticized him for involving the Syrians in decisions that did not affect them.[98] It added that Bennike was exceeding his brief and that his ruling disregarded decisions taken by Ralph Bunche, the acting UN mediator in Palestine during the 1951 dispute over the Hula drainage project. But Israel's protests were to no avail and Bennike did not back down.

When Israel stood by its refusal to suspend work, the Syrians submitted a complaint to the Security Council (16 October). In consequence, the main arena of activity switched to New York. The U.S. pressure on Israel, in the form of deferment of the grant-in-aid, had no effect. The deferment was not made public—whether because the State Department thought that it could persuade Israel behind the scenes or because it feared that publicity would trigger counter-pressure by the American Jewish lobby. Even though the deferment of the grant represented a serious threat to the weak Israeli economy, the documents available to us offer no evidence that economic concerns overcame political ones. Ben-Gurion and his associates remained resolutely opposed to a suspension of work, which they described as a surrender to a UN *diktat* and American economic pressure

96. See *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1303 and 1307–1308.
97. See Nos. 389, 391, and 413.
98. See No. 397.

and harmful to an enterprise that was a cornerstone of the national economic infrastructure.

On several occasions Sharett and some of his colleagues, in the Foreign Ministry and in Washington, proposed a temporary suspension of work in order to relieve the American pressure and head off charges that Israel was violating UN resolutions; but their view was not accepted. Eban wrote the Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister, in his own name and that of his colleagues at the embassy, venting harsh criticism of the timing of the start of work. He maintained that the decision extended the adverse front with the Americans instead of contracting it and made the establishment of good relations with the new Administration more difficult. It would have been better to evince willingness to suspend work temporarily and accept Bennike's demand at an earlier stage in the conflict. Eban's criticism was rejected: Ben-Gurion replied that it was sometimes necessary to act counter to the UN if that organization's decisions were tantamount to a death sentence on the development of an independent Israeli economy.[99]

The Qibya operation (14 October) altered the situation. In anticipation of the Security Council debate, Sharett relayed to the Government Eban's recommendation that work near the Benot Yaaqov Bridge be suspended, in the interest of improving relations with the United States during the debate. Sharett's proposal was rejected, and all Eban's entreaties were of no avail.[100]

The American linkage between the Qibya operation and the national water project was not long in coming. On 20 October, Secretary of State Dulles told a press conference about the Administration's decision to defer release of the grant-in-aid funds to Israel. He said that the decision had be taken as a result of Israel's refusal to fulfill its obligations and honor the request of the UNTSO chief of staff to halt work in the north. The public announcement led to intervention by U.S. Jews and indirectly helped Israel agree to a suspension of work. American Jewish leaders met with Dulles on 24 October to protest the deferment of the grant. Unable to withstand the pressure, State Department officials privately admitted that the decision to withhold the grant had been mistaken. Seeking a compromise solution, the State Department suggested that Israel agree to a Security Council call at the outset of the debate on the Syrian complaint to suspend work for the duration of the debate; in return, the State Department would announce the reinstatement of the grant-in-aid. The Government accepted this compromise.[101]

Eban announced that work on the canal had been suspended at the start of the Security Council debate on 27 October. The next day, as agreed,

99. See correspondence with Eban in Nos. 392, 398, 420, 430, and 443.

100. See Nos. 437, 444, and No. 445 and n. 1 there.

101. See No. 473.

Dulles announced that $26 million in grant-in-aid funds had been released to Israel.[102]

The suspension of work put an end to the grant crisis with the Administration but did not conclude Israel's "litigation" in the Security Council. Israeli representatives did everything in their power to persuade the Western Powers to submit a favorable draft resolution that would permit continuation of the work, with the necessary reservations, and prevent the Syrians from blocking work in the future. The Security Council debate lasted until 22 January 1954, when the Soviet Union vetoed the draft resolution submitted by the Western Powers. The excavations near the Benot Yaaqov Bridge were never resumed. The national water project was put on hold, to be completed later at another time and in another place.

* * *

Israeli foreign policy did not chalk up many diplomatic successes during 1953. Relations with the United States took a worrying turn. The situation along the Jordanian border did not improve, despite reprisal raids, and had an adverse impact on the attitude towards Israel in the international arena. The attempt to reach an agreement with Syria failed. The project to divert water from the Jordan River was suspended. Even secret contacts in Europe with Egypt, against the background of the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations, proved fruitless. At first it seemed that the Egyptian regime was interested in improving relations with Israel in return for assistance in obtaining economic aid from the United States—to the extent of a proposal for purchasing Egyptian cotton—and moral backing for its demand that Great Britain withdraw its forces from the Canal Zone. It became clear, however, that Egypt did not intend to make any fundamental alterations to its policy towards Israel; it would not allow free passage for Israeli ships through the Suez Canal nor would it cease hostile propaganda. The Foreign Ministry assessment was that Egypt merely wanted to lull Israel and create a favorable pro-Egyptian climate in international public opinion.[103]

The one sterling success related to reparations from Germany. Early in the year, the delay in parliamentary ratification of the reparations agreement—a result of Egyptian pressure—worried Israel. The delay in the transfer of the first reparations payments had a severely detrimental effect on Israel's balance of payments. Nevertheless, the failure of the German-Egyptian trade negotiations, the stubborn persistence of German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, and, to some extent, Israeli diplomatic endeavors enabled the Bonn government to approve the reparations agreement on 13 February; ratification followed the next month—18 March by the Bundes-

102. See Nos. 475 and 484.

103. See Nos. 47, 70, 84, 194, 205, 215, 217, 239, 415, 419, and 548.

tag and 20 March by the Bundesrat. On 27 March, 1953, the procedure was completed by an exchange of the documents of ratification at the UN secretariat.[104] Immediately afterwards, Israeli diplomats raised the issue of relations with Germany and spoke of the need for a change of attitude towards that country. They argued for mutual respect between Israel and all nations and cited ways to prepare Israeli public opinion for such ties with Germany. Sharett accepted his colleagues' assessments and agreed that public opinion must be prepared. He asked them, however, to slow the pace, because the Israeli public was not yet ready for such a change.[105]

In July 1953, the Foreign Ministry was finally transferred to Jerusalem; this completed the transfer of most ministries to the capital. The move was strongly opposed by the United States, which pressured the representatives of the Western Powers and other countries to toe its line. Sharett vainly endeavored to persuade the ambassadors of the United States, Britain, and France that the transfer of the ministry was merely a technical matter—one more step in the process of concentrating government offices in Jerusalem—and not to be interpreted as having political implications. For the balance of the year, most foreign diplomats accredited to Israel, especially those of the United States, eschewed contacts with Foreign Ministry personnel in Jerusalem.[106]

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In summary, 1953 was a transitional year in Israel's political and security development. After five years of independence, Israel had consolidated its status and place among the nations, but had not attained peace and tranquillity. The tense situation along the borders and the absence of peace with the Arab countries had the greatest influence on Israel's standing in the international arena and affected its foreign policy. The year saw the emergence of the processes that would lead to the Sinai Campaign of 1956; the relative calm that characterized the state's first years was undermined. The ongoing tension between foreign-policy makers and the defense establishment, whose roots went back earlier, intensified considerably, as a result of the controversy over the appropriate response to the serious situation along the borders. This tension was to grow further in the coming years.

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104. See Nos. 26, 28, 37, 58, 82, 98, 100, 101, 140, and 141.
105. See Nos. 140, 141, 153, 305, and 307.
106. See Nos. 111, 113, and 280; No. 316, n. 2; Nos. 322, 363, 369, and 407.

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181.	23 April	**W. Eytan to the Israel Embassy in Washington (telegram)** Instructions for diplomatic activity in the aftermath of the killing of five people by the Jordanians.
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321. 2 August **M. Sharett to M. Fischer**
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322. 3 August **United States Division to the Israel Embassy in Washington (telegram)**
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323. 4 August **D. Goitein to M. Sharett**
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325. 5 August **A. Eban to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram)**
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326. 5 August **M. Sharett to Sh. Avigur**
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330. 6 August **A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram)**
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332. 7 August **E. Sasson to E. Najar**
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368. 11 September **The Israel Embassy in Washington to the United States Division (telegram)**
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369. 12 September **Meeting: M. Sharett–F. Russell**
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370. 13 September **W. Eytan to the Israel Embassy in Washington (telegram)**
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371. 14 September **M. Avidan to Sh. Bentsur**
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372. 14 September **A. Eban to W. Eytan (telegram)**
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373. 15 September **W. Eytan to the Israel Delegation to the United Nations (telegram)**
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374. 15 September **A. R. Moore to E. Najar**
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378. 21 September **A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram)**
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379. 22 September **G. Rafael to A. Eban (telegram)**
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380. 22 September **A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram)**
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381. 23 September **V. Bennike to M. Sharett**
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556.	3 December	**M. Sharett to Sh. Eliashiv (telegram)** Meeting between Sharett and Abramov.
557.	3 December	**G. Rafael to M. Sharett (telegram)** Consultation of Israel delegation at the United Nations about the conference with the Jordanians.
558.	3 December	**J. Tsur to the Western Europe Division** Problems of acquisitions in France.
559.	4 December	**G. Avner to W. Eytan (telegram)** Conversation with Falla: The conference with Jordan.
560.	4 December	**E. Elath to M. Sharett (telegram)** Conversation with Allen: Israel's protest over Eden's statement in the House of Commons concerning an Israel-Jordan conference.
561.	4 December	**J. Tsur to W. Eytan (telegram)** Meeting at the French foreign ministry: The French stand on work near the demilitarized zone, freedom of passage through the Suez Canal, and the American plan for supplying arms to several Arab countries.
562.	4 December	**D. Shaltiel to J. Herzog** Conversation with da Cunha: Israel's reaction to the proposal to demilitarize the Jerusalem area.
563.	4 December	**A. Eban to W. Eytan (telegram)** Anger about the IDF's stand against the decision by the Ministerial Defence Committee concerning a conference with Jordan.
564.	4 December	**A. Eban to H. C. Lodge** The principles that Israel would like to see included in the draft Security Council resolution on the Syrian complaint against Israel on work near the demilitarized zone. Appendix: The Three-Power draft resolution; Eban's recommendations for revisions.
565.	5 December	**G. Rafael to W. Eytan (telegram)** Meeting between Eban and Lodge: Discussion of the Three-Power draft Security Council resolution on the Syrian complaint about work near the demilitarized zone.
566.	5 December	**A. Nissan to W. Eytan (telegram)** Conversation with Foreign Minister of Denmark: Request that the Danish representative at the United Nations be instructed to support the renewal of work near the demilitarized zone.
567.	7 December	**M. Sharett to A. Eban (telegram)** Israel's position on the anticipated Security Council resolution summing up the discussion of the Syrian complaint about work near the demilitarized zone.

595. 20 December **M. Sharett to Sh. Eliashiv (telegram)**
Instructions for Eliashiv's meeting with Gromyko.

596. 20 December **J. Tsur to M. Sharett (telegram)**
Impressions from Divon's visit to Morocco.

597. 21 December **M. Sharett to A. Eban (telegram)**
Instructions for a formal reaction at the Security Council if the draft resolution about work near the demilitarized zone is approved.

598. 21 December **A. Eban to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram)**
Recommendation to launch a campaign directed against Egypt following the confiscation of a meat shipment aboard the *Franca Maria*.

599. 21 December **Sh. Eliashiv to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram)**
Conversation with Gromyko concerning the Security Council discussion of the work near the Benot-Yaaqov bridge..

600. 22 December **M. Kidron to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram)**
Meeting between Eban and Hammarskjöld about the conference with the Jordanians under Article XII of the Armistice Agreement.

601. 22 December **A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram)**
Report on talks with Security Council members concerning the Syrian complaint about work near the demilitarized zone.

602. 22 December **A. Eban to W. Eytan (telegram)**
Request for diplomatic activity in Copenhagen in advance of the Security Council vote on the resolution to sum up the discussion of the Syrian complaint about work near the demilitarized zone.

603. 22 December **A. Eban to Sir Gladwyn Jebb**
Israeli opposition to the proposed amendments to the draft Security Council resolution summing up the discussion on work near the demilitarized zone.

Appendix: The proposed amendments to the Three-Power draft resolution.

604. 22 December **D. Hacohen to M. Sharett**
Meeting with the Burmese chief of staff: Improving relations between Israel and Burma.

605. 23 December **M. Sharett to the Israel Embassies in Washington and London (telegram)**
Policy on freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal.

606. 23 December **G. Rafael to the Israel Delegation to the United Nations (telegram)**
Instructions to try to postpone a Security Council resolution about work near the demilitarized zone until January 1954.

607. 24 December **E. Elath to W. Eytan**
Analysis of Israel's relations with the United States and Great Britain.

608. 24 December **J. Herzog to A. Eban**
Activity to lift the foreign missions' boycott of Jerusalem.

609. 24 December **E. Elath to W. Eytan (telegram)**
Meeting with Selwyn Lloyd: Request for British intervention to release the cargo from the *Franca Maria*.

LIST OF ARCHIVES AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN REFERENCES

Israel State Archives

43. *Record Group: Prime Minister Office, Prime Minister's bureau*

93. *Record Group: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel Missions Abroad*

93.01	Coded telegrams
93.02	Paris
93.03	New York
93.04	London
93.08	Washington
93.13	Rangoon

105. *Office of the President of Israel*

130. *Record Group: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Head Office*

130.02	Office of the Minister and the Director-General
130.03	International Organizations Division
130.06	Economics Division
130.09	Coded telegrams
130.10	West European Division
130.11	East European Division
130.12	Latin American Division
130.13	British Commonwealth Division
130.15	Middle East Division
130.16	Armistice Affairs Division
130.20	United States Division

Israel Labour Party Archives

Israel Military and Defence Establishment Archives (Abbreviated reference: IMDEA)

Public Record Office (Abbreviated reference: PRO)

FO371 *Foreign Office, General Correspondence, Political*

Abbreviations used in Editorial Headings and References

Inc.	Incoming text
Orig.	Original
Outg.	Outgoing text
Tel.	Telegram

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS IN REFERENCES

Note: The list includes only books and publications mentioned in the annotations, editorial notes, and introduction.

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NOTES
AND SUMMARIES OF
HEBREW DOCUMENTS

All summaries of Hebrew documents and all notes are arranged chronologically, i.e., according to the numbers of the documents in the Main Volume. The notes are translated in full, even those pertaining to passages that are omitted in the summaries; in this case, the call numbers to notes are also omitted in the summaries.

Editorial headings of Hebrew documents are reproduced in full, while headings to translations of notes to documents in English or French are given in a shortened version. Where no notes are appended, the English and French documents are represented by headings only. Editorial Notes appear in the same order as in the Main Volume, preceding the relevant document.

1. E. Ben-Horin (Washington) to A. Eban (Washington). 5 January 1953

Copy: 130.15/3744/1

Ben-Horin reports on his conversation with an official of the Egyptian embassy in Washington on 2 January 1953. His objective was to ascertain how the Israeli campaign against arms supplies to Egypt was affecting the mood in the Egyptian embassy and to make it clear to the Egyptian ambassador[1] that Israel's protests were not motivated by a desire to harass Egypt but by Egypt's policy towards Israel in recent months. Ben-Horin opened the conversation with a reference to their last meeting, in September,[2] at which he had told his interlocutor that Israel would not attack Egypt in the General Assembly, despite its many causes for complaint, if Egypt divorced itself from the Syrian and Iraqi plans to raise the issue of Palestine in the General Assembly. Ben-Horin added that Israel's basic attitude about American arms for Egypt remains unchanged. Israel appreciates the new Egyptian regime's efforts to restore order and realizes how hard it is working to re-establish Egypt's good name. The Egyptian Embassy in Washington must have been aware of the fact that, during the first months after Naguib's rise to power, statements by the government of Israel had helped enhance the new regime's image in the U.S. press and public. When the Egyptian diplomat asked, "Why are you so harsh with us now?" Ben-Horin explained that in recent months, after a short period of silence, Egypt has jumped back on the Arab League bandwagon and tried to compete with the hostile propaganda of Jamali[3] and Shuqairy.[4] He cited a number of manifestations of Egypt's hostility: Naguib was in the forefront of the Arab states' threats against Germany on the reparations issue and has made extreme anti-Israel declarations ruling out any prospects for peace; the Arab boycott office has been transferred to Egypt; Egypt has tightened the blockade of Israeli shipping in the Suez Canal. In view of such manifestations, Israel cannot stand idly by while Egypt attempts to strengthen its military to an extent far exceeding its domestic needs and

with types of weaponry incompatible with the Tripartite Declaration[6] and the August 1949 Security Council debates.[7]

The Egyptian diplomat confirmed that the weapons that are the subject of negotiations with Great Britain, as well as other weapons, are not required merely for domestic security; he assumes that Israel is fully aware that Egypt has no intention of using them against Israel. Egypt requires such weapons to buttress its status and prestige, both domestically and internationally. Ben-Horin answered that, in view of Egypt's current attitude towards Israel, Israel can take no chances.

The Egyptian diplomat replied that Israel will be reinforced militarily by the German reparations, but is doing nothing to pay compensation to the Arab refugees. Ben-Horin explained that there is no moral or legal connection between reparations and compensation. Israel has announced its willingness to pay compensation, but it must achieve economic stability to do so. The Arab boycott is no help in this regard, and the Arab League's attempts to thwart the German reparation payments will only harm the refugees.

Ben-Horin concluded by expressing his hope that Egypt will free itself from the influence of Jamali and Shuqairy and adopt a policy more beneficial to its own interests. The objective of Egyptian and Israeli negotiations with the West and the United States should be the well-being of each country rather than harming each other. Egypt needs American good will and knows that Israel had helped it reap such good will until recently, when it was obliged to make plain its displeasure with Egyptian policy in the Middle East.

At the end of the dialogue, both men considered, "entirely off the record," whether it was worthwhile to arrange a meeting between their ambassadors and parted *sine die*.

Notes

1. Muhammad Kamil 'Abd al-Rahim.
2. The conversation took place on 11 September 1952. See Vol. 7, No. 351.
3. Muhammad Fadil Jamali, foreign minister of Iraq until the end of January 1953; head of the Iraqi delegation to the seventh session of the UN General Assembly.
4. Ahmad Shuqairy, undersecretary-general for political affairs of the Arab League and member of the Syrian delegation to the seventh and eighth sessions of the UN General Assembly.
5. 'Abd al-Hamīd Ghālib.
6. On 25 May 1950. See Vol. 5, No. 248.
7. See Vol. 4, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, pp. 133–35.

2. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 5 January 1953

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 93.01/2209/2

Eban requests the Foreign Ministry to forward his telegram to the Prime Minister. He reports that U.S. Jewish leaders are confused and in disarray concerning the Prague trial.[1] Several Jewish organizations favor accusing the Soviet Union of a blatant antisemitism that ranks it among the persecutors of the Jewish people and leaves nothing to distinguish it from Nazi Germany. The U.S. government wants Israel to adopt this approach and draw the conclusion that it should align itself with those throughout the world who denounce the Soviet Union on the political and propaganda front. However, people such as Goldmann[2] and Rose Halprin[3] counsel moderation and propose condemning the Prague trial for its antisemitic and anti-Zionist manifestations, but without equating Cominform antisemitism with that of the Nazis. Eban requests guidelines on how to react. He shares Goldmann's opinion that the Prague trial must be condemned as an antisemitic phenomenon in its own right, one that raises serious doubts concerning the attitude of the Soviet Union, but without stating unequivocally that antisemitism has become a permanent feature of Soviet policy.[4]

Notes

1. See Vol. 7, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, p. 299.
2. Nahum Goldmann, president of the World Jewish Congress. See his letters to Ben-Gurion and Sharett, dated 9 January 1953, decrying the tendency to turn the protest against the Prague Trial into "a crusade against Communism" (130.02/2411/19).
3. Rose Halprin, member of the Jewish Agency Executive in New York.
4. Ben-Gurion replied that even though the Prague Trial "was planned down to the last detail in the Kremlin and one must be prepared for a serious change of course in Soviet policy, in an anti-Jewish, or at least anti-Israel, direction," he still agreed with Eban and Goldmann that one should refrain from taking "this prognosis as fact," and "sufficient to the day the sorrows thereof" (9 January 1953, 130.09/2309/12).

3. Editorial Note

Sharett's Participation in the Conference of Socialist Parties in Rangoon, 5–15 January 1953

A conference of representatives of Asian socialist parties was held in Rangoon on 5–15 January 1953, attended by delegates from Japan, Indonesia,

Malaya, Burma, Pakistan, India, Egypt, Lebanon, and Israel. Israel was invited to the conference despite Arab protests. Its delegates, representing Mapai, were Foreign Minister Sharett and Reuven Barkatt. Ben-Gurion sent special greetings to the conference. The conference resolved to set up an Asian Socialist organization (excluding Egypt and Lebanon), with headquarters in Burma. Western representatives who attended the conference, seconded by the delegates from Israel and Malaya, failed to persuade the participants that the new organization should join the Socialist International. The conference merely declared its affinity with that organization. One of the conference resolutions rejected Soviet-style communism and called for the replacement of feudalism and capitalism by socialist regimes. The conference adopted decisions on various issues, including Asia and international peace, agrarian policy in Asia, and the like. (For personal impressions of the conference, see Shiloah to Elath, 17 February 1953, 93.04/42/8.)

4. Ch. Herzog to the United States Division. 6 January 1953

Notes

1. The outgoing version erroneously reads 1952. The date has been corrected according to the incoming version (130.02/2455/10).
2. Benjamin Gibli, head of the IDF Intelligence Department.
3. The meeting took place on 5 January. Cf. *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1088–93.
4. On 23 September 1952, Britain informed Israel of its decision to approve the sale of 14 jet planes to Israel, and the same number to each of the Arab countries, excluding Egypt (see Vol. 7, No. 369); in November 1952 it announced its intention to sell jet planes to Egypt as well (see Vol. 7, No. 449).
5. On 10 and 11 November 1952. See Vol. 7, Nos. 431 and 432.
6. On 13 November and 26 December 1952. Ibid., Nos. 439 and 516.
7. On 17 December 1952. Ibid., No. 503.
8. The Tripartite Declaration of May 1950; see Vol. 5, No. 248.
9. The Security Council resolution of 1 September 1951. See Vol. 6, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, p. 257.
10. See document dated 5 January 1953, 93.03/3063/10.
11. In another telegram, Eban stressed the significance of the conversation: (a) Acheson admitted for the first time that Israel's apprehension justified placing limitations on Western arms supplies to the Arabs. (b) He did not deny that the United States had been considering supplying weapons to Egypt, but said that in view of Israel's "understandable anxiety" his government would reconsider the matter. (c) Eban received the impression that Acheson's reservations about the British aircraft sale were sincere and categorical. (See Eban to the Western Europe Division, telegram WTE30, 6 January 1953, 93.01/2209/2.) For further details on the conversation and activity

in Washington on the issue of arms for Egypt, see also the memorandum by Ch. Herzog, 9 January 1953, 130.20/2460/6.

5. Editorial Note

Submission of a Note from Israel to Great Britain, 7 January 1953

The Israeli chargé d'affaires in Britain, M. Keren, delivered the note that follows to the British permanent undersecretary of state for foreign affairs, Sir William Strang, on 7 January 1953. That same day, copies of the note were transmitted to the American and French ambassadors in Israel. During their conversation, Strang attempted to persuade Keren that Israel was exaggerating the importance of the sale of aircraft to Arab countries. Keren tried to persuade Strang that the provision of the planes would alter the balance of military power to Israel's detriment and constitute a real threat to its security. Strang promised to pass on the note to Eden and to relay his comments at a later date. (See Keren to Comay, 9 January 1953, 130.02/2382/8. Compare Strang's report, 7 January 1953, PRO, FO371/104215. That file contains additional documents concerning the Foreign Office's reactions to Israel's note.) For Britain's reply to the note, see No. 36.

6. Note from the Israel Chargé d'Affaires in Great Britain to the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. 7 January 1953

Notes

1. See Vol. 7, No. 368.
2. See Vol. 5, No. 248.

7. W. Eytan (Tel Aviv) to the Heads of the Israel Missions Abroad. 7 January 1953

Circular: 93.03/3010/5

Eytan writes with some concern about Israel's weak ties with Asia. Apart from the new legation in Tokyo and honorary consuls in Manila and Bombay, Israel has no diplomatic representation in Asia. He fears that the consolidation of the Asian-Arab bloc, as manifested at the conference in Cairo,[1] will spur the Asian countries to identify with the Arabs on issues

relevant to Israel, such as the German reparations. In his opinion, one of the main reasons for Asian estrangement from Israel is ignorance of its character, achievements, problems, and goals. Israel is making efforts to establish ties with Asian countries, but the process is slow and should be speeded up. Eytan instructs Israel's representatives to explain Israel's position on German reparations to Asian diplomats. This is not the only issue, however; he mentions other topics, such as the problem of Arabs as citizens of Israel, Israel's historic right to the Land of Israel, U.S. aid to Israel, and so on.

To facilitate implementation of this assignment, Eytan announces that his office will regularly send the Israel missions material and information on how the Asian nations relate to Israel's problems. In each mission a staff member will be named to coordinate Asian affairs and report on his activities to the head of mission, the Asia Division, and the Research Division.

Notes

1. Israel's first minister to Japan, Joseph Linton, presented his credentials on 26 December 1952.
2. The reference is to a conference of the representatives of the Arab League states and of five Asian countries (India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and Indonesia) held in Cairo on 23–24 December 1952. This was the first appearance of an Arab-Asian bloc outside the UN. The conference was convened to discuss the Palestine issue, the reparations agreement, and French policy in North Africa. Only on the last issue was a resolution passed, because the Asian diplomats refused to discuss Palestine and the reparations.

8. A. Eban to M. Comay. 9 January 1953

Notes

1. In light of Eban's conversation with Acheson (see No. 4) and Byroade's visit to London, Comay concluded as follows: (a) Britain will persevere in its plan to sell the aircraft, with American consent. (b) The State Department is convinced that a modest military aid program for Naguib should be implemented and will make every effort to obtain Dulles's and Eisenhower's approval (9 January 1953, 130.09/2377/1).
2. Eban is alluding to President Truman's consultation with Acheson and Harriman on 7 January. On that occasion, the president ordered a halt to all negotiations on the shipment of American arms to Egypt, due to Israel's anxiety. He also criticized the British shipments. Despite this criticism, Eban did not think the United States would press Britain on the matter (Eban to the United States Division, telegram WTE31, 7 January 1953, 93.01/2209/2).

9. Editorial Note

Transmission of a Note Requesting an American Grant-in-Aid, 9 January 1953

On 9 January, the Israel Embassy in Washington transmitted to the State Department a note containing a request for the annual grant from the United States. Israel requested a total of $118 million for the coming fiscal year (July 1953–June 1954). The note provided details of Israel's economic situation and financial needs. (The note, dated 2 January 1953, is in File 130.02/2420/20. See also Herlitz to the United States Division, 15 January 1953, 93.08/361/7.)

10. Meeting of the Staff of the Israel Delegation to the United Nations with the Staff of the Israel Embassy in Washington. 12 January 1953

Report: 130.02/2410/9

Arab-Israeli relations were discussed with a view to peace with Egypt. In his comprehensive opening survey, Eban noted that Israel has no concerted policy for achieving peace but merely responds to occasional opportunities that arise. There are "peak seasons" devoted to much thought and the diffusion of information, usually followed by slack periods when peace is no longer an issue deemed to require long-range planning. Eban admitted that the Arabs bear the onus for the failure to achieve peace, but held that this fact is important only as a propaganda tactic and not for peace itself.

In his opinion, Israel's attitude to peace is based on two main considerations: (1) Peace is essential to Israel in the long-term perspective. Israel's ability to overcome its economic and security problems is contingent on foreign assistance. This has been diminishing, but Israel's self-reliance has not increased in parallel. Hence Israeli policy must find a way to break the Arab stranglehold. (2) Taking the initiative to achieve peace is to some extent a preventative measure against future blows. It is preferable that Israel not leave the initiative to others and protect itself against the inherent dangers of peace-making by third parties. Israel has emerged victorious whenever it took the initiative, including the campaign for UN recognition of Israel's political independence in 1947, admission to the UN in early 1949, the armistice agreements, the 1950 plan for supervision of the Holy Places, efforts in 1951 to lift the Suez Canal blockade, and the direct-negotiations initiative at the seventh session of the General Assembly in 1952. Eban believes that these campaigns have frustrated the other side's prospects for success and cemented cracks that imperiled Israel. The final balance sheet

of these initiatives has been in Israel's favor. On the other hand, whenever Israel's enemies have launched political attacks, it has only with difficulty managed to extricate itself from danger; and when resolutions such as that calling for the internationalization of Jerusalem in 1949 were passed, great efforts were required to forestall their implementation.

In Eban's opinion, the last General Assembly session proved that the absence of peace had created difficulties for the Arabs in the international arena; Israeli propaganda should highlight this fact. Until that session, the Arabs had been using the public debate at the United Nations as a substitute for contacts with Israel; but after the Assembly session proved that this tactic is no longer practical, they lost their taste for public debate in full view of the world. Circumstances are impelling the Arabs towards contact with Israel aimed at reaching an accord. In Israel, and especially in Jordan and Lebanon, economic pressures provide a strong impetus for achieving a settlement. Eban believes that Israel should not slacken its efforts and should keep harassing the Arabs and make it abundantly clear that circumstances are pushing them towards peace. The world must be weaned of the concept that the absence of peace in the Middle East is a natural phenomenon. Israel's mission is not only to influence the Arabs but also to launch a propaganda and persuasion campaign among its friends. Skepticism must be banished and warnings issued that in the absence of fortitude to establish normal relations in the Middle East there is no assurance that peace can be instituted in the international arena.

In this context, the world must be made to realize that without Israel no concerted international action is possible in the region. The West must be pestered concerning the peace process. Eban believes that Israeli pressure for peace is already chafing the Western powers; Israel must persist in its efforts.

All channels must be tried, everywhere in the world, and new ties and acquaintanceships must be formed. In particular, relations must be fostered with Asian countries and through them with the leaders of the Arab world.

As for the refugees, a new approach is necessary. The Arabs must be attacked and denounced for refusing to absorb them. Israel must stop defending itself against the claims for their repatriation, since it is now universally understood that the solution is their absorption in Arab countries. Israel must stop proposing partial concessions, such as the reunification of families, the repatriation of a certain number of refugees, or unilateral steps, and must concentrate exclusively on the conclusion of reciprocal accords beneficial to both parties.

Eban believes that it is extremely important that the world become aware of extensive and vigorous activity in Israel aimed at achieving peace as Israel perceives it. Only if Israel shows the world that it embraces peace wholeheartedly and is working towards that end will the international

community be convinced that Israel is sincere in its policy.

Israel must strive for the abolition of the Palestine Conciliation Commission and try to disprove the assertion that it would be a revolutionary change for the Arabs to conduct direct negotiations. The precedent of the armistice talks, where the Arabs sat down together with the Israelis, can be cited.

The modality for achieving the foregoing is Article XII, Paragraph 3 of the Egypt-Israel armistice agreement, which gives both parties the right to ask the UN secretary-general to convene a conference to modify or amend the agreement. Eban proposed making use of this paragraph to convene such a conference. The West must be made to understand that a Middle East defense arrangement cannot be established without an accord between Israel and the Arab states.

Eban's survey was followed by a discussion: G. Rafael agreed with him, in particular about Article XII. He agreed that the West should be badgered without letup about the issue of peace. There should also be long-term planning of contacts with the Arabs and not just chance encounters. The Arab League should be presented as a serious obstacle not only to peace with Israel but also to a security pact for the entire region. Y. Levin pointed out that the information campaign should not target Washington alone but should have an international scope. A. Lourie expressed concern about the proposed conference and thought it better to continue with covert contacts. E. Evron demurred at the optimistic view that the Arabs would agree to direct peace negotiations. A. Harman pointed out several dangers inherent in having recourse to Article XII, but believed that this could provide an opportunity to escape the restricted context of border rectifications and break through to an overall settlement. He proposed setting up an organization in America to promote peace between Israel and the Arabs. He warned that a comprehensive peace plan would take many years; meanwhile Israel should focus on its military and economic consolidation. Israel's military and economic inadequacies should not be overemphasized, because this was liable to be interpreted as a sign of weakness.

Summing up the discussion, Eban said that the decisive factor is not the Arabs' wishes but rather what Israel wants. All developments in the Middle East since the establishment of the State took place despite Arab opposition; Israel's wishes had prevailed. As for the proposal for behind-the-scenes talks, Eban stated that Israel has nothing to hide and should conduct its affairs openly.

Notes

1. See Vol. 7, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, pp. 306–307.
2. See Vol. 2, Appendix J.
3. See No. 12.

11. Sh. Eliashiv (Moscow) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 13 January 1953

Coded Tel.: QIA360; Inc.: 130.09/2325/6

Eliashiv reports on an item distributed by the TASS news agency that had appeared that day in all the Soviet newspapers, reporting on "the exposure of a gang of terrorist doctors whose aim was to shorten the lives of the active leaders of the Soviet Union." Six of the nine doctors are Jews.[1] They are accused of killing Zhdanov[2] and Shcherbakov[3] and of attempting to murder a number of military leaders by false diagnoses and harmful treatment. The item stated that the doctors are connected to a foreign intelligence agency and the Joint Distribution Committee, which was termed "a bourgeois Jewish nationalist organization founded by agents of American espionage." One of the accused, Vovsi, has admitted receiving instructions from the Joint and from the "bourgeois Jewish" leader Mikhoels.[4] On the same day almost identical lead articles appeared in all Soviet papers. *Pravda* stated, *inter alia:* "The exposure of the doctors' espionage ring is a serious blow to the international Jewish Zionist organization." The articles call on the Soviet public to be on the alert for terrorists.

Notes

1. The six Jewish physicians were professors: M. S. Vovsi, M. M. Cogan, B. B. Cogan, A. A. Feldman, Y. G. Ettinger, and A. M. Greenstein. The non-Jewish professors were: N. V. Vinogradov, P. A. Yagurov, and G. A. Mayorov. All occupied senior positions in the Soviet medical elite.
2. Andrei Aleksandrovich Zhdanov, a senior member of the Soviet hierarchy, died in unknown circumstances in 1948.
3. Aleksandr Shcherbakov, head of the Main Political Administration of the Red Army from 1942 until his death in 1945.
4. Shlomo Mikhoels (Vovsi) was chairman of the Jewish Antifascist Committee and director of the Moscow Yiddish theater until his murder by the Soviet security services in January 1948.
5. For further details on the Doctors' Plot and hypotheses about its significance, see No. 31.

12. E. Evron (New York) to A. Eban (Washington). 13 January 1953

Copy: 93.03/3043/10

Evron notes the difficulties and stumbling-blocks associated with Eban's

plan, put forward at the recent consultation, to launch a "peace campaign." [1] In his opinion, the Arabs view their defeat in the war as the greatest calamity to have befallen them since their expulsion from Spain; the sanctity of Palestine merely magnifies the calamity. Arab public opinion is afire with hatred for Israel. The stupefaction and fear that were the immediate result of the debacle have given way to a psychological and military recovery accompanied by hopes of revenge and accelerated rearmament. Far from the Arabs' making any moves towards peace, there has actually been a regression on this issue. While 'Abdallah was alive not a single statesman had been willing to affix his signature even to amendments to the armistice agreement. Today the extremists among the Palestinians hold the reins of power in Jordan; even implementation of Article VIII of the armistice agreement is more remote than in the past.

The goal of the Arab world has been and remains the destruction of the State of Israel. The Arabs are intensifying the "cold-hot" war against Israel by the blockade of the Suez Canal, the economic boycott, terrorist infiltration, and threats of war. They miss no opportunity to attack Israel on the economic and political fronts, for example, on the reparations issue, protests against the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and India, and the struggle at the United Nations. The Arabs agreed to sit down with Israel at the armistice talks because of their military defeat. Unless strong pressure is exerted to make them realize that peace is no less vital to them than it is to Israel, there is no possibility of reaching an agreement with them.

Evron believes that Israel's political objective, apart from peace, should be to weaken Arab unity and intensify the conflicts of interest among them. For example, Israel could try to encourage the Palestinian refugees to demand resettlement in the countries where they are presently residing; efforts should be made to undermine the refugees' confidence in their leaders and in the rulers who keep repeating the doomed slogan of return. It is also worth trying to exert economic pressure on Arab countries.

Some thought should be given to the possibility that the Arab governments may eventually decide to begin peace negotiations as a tactical measure. In such an event, they are liable to request repatriation of the refugees and border rectifications—two issues on which Israel is not prepared to yield. The danger then would be that Israel, under pressure from the Powers and public opinion, would be forced to compromise. Compromise on these two issues would be disastrous.

Evron, unlike Eban, does not believe that there are no serious problems between Israel and Egypt, and mentions the Gaza Strip. It may be assumed that Egypt does not want to permanently annex the Strip, but its annexation by Israel would be tantamount to suicide. In fact, claims Evron, apart from a free port for Jordan Israel has nothing to offer the Arabs, who at present do not need Israel as a market for their products. On the contrary,

they are afraid of opening their own markets to Israeli manufactures.

Evron does not suggest rejecting Eban's idea of a peace offensive, but is merely pointing out the problems involved.

Notes

1. See No. 10.
2. The relevant paragraph dealt with the establishment of a joint Israeli-Jordanian committee to deal with outstanding issues, including access to Mt. Scopus. See Vol. 3, Appendix C.
3. *Sic.* Should read "to arm."
4. See Vol. 3, Appendix H.

13. Ch. Yahil (Cologne) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 13 January 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2354/1

Yahil reports on his conversation with Blankenhorn[1] on 12 January. Blankenhorn apologized for the delay in the ratification of the reparations agreement caused by the negotiations with Egypt.[2] He said that the German government hopes to come to terms with Egypt on a comprehensive economic agreement and added that a German delegation was about to leave for Egypt. Blankenhorn explained that his government wants to hold off the decision to submit the reparations agreement to parliament until after the delegation leaves for Cairo. He asked that Israel wait patiently and not submit a diplomatic note in the meantime. He spoke at some length on the domestic difficulties facing the German government. Yahil explained the economic problems and public-opinion issues facing Israel as a result of the delay and stressed that his government could not refrain from applying pressure if no substantive step was taken by the opening of parliament the following week.

Yahil writes that the conversation was cordial, despite a certain forcefulness on the issue. He hopes to meet with W. Hallstein[3] in two days' time.[4]

Notes

1. Herbert Blankenhorn, director of the Political Department of the West German Foreign Ministry.
2. The allusion is to the delay in parliamentary approval of the reparations agreement, which was signed on 10 September 1952 (see Vol. 7, No. 349). The delay resulted in part from the international campaign against the agreement waged by the Arab

countries, led by Egypt. To mollify Egypt, the Germans initiated negotiation for an economic agreement in exchange for an end to Egyptian opposition to the reparations agreement.

3. See No. 28.
4. Joseph Rosensaft, chairman of the Central Committee of Bergen-Belsen Survivors.
5. Walter Hallstein, secretary of state in the West German Foreign Ministry.
6. In the meeting between the two, Hallstein reiterated that his government wanted to do everything possible to coordinate the timing of the German delegation's negotiations in Egypt with ratification of the agreement by the Federal parliament. He predicted that the ratification process would be set into motion only in late January or early February 1953. (See report on Yahil's talks with Blankenhorn and Hallstein, in an undated letter from Yahil to W. Eytan, 130.02.2417/7. The letter was apparently written on 15 January. It bears a "received" stamp with the date 20 January 1953.) For subsequent contacts with representatives of the West German government, see No. 28; see also No. 26.

14. Y. Meroz (Ankara) to W. Eytan. 14 January 1953

Coded Tel.: AKA164; Inc.: 130.15/3755/8

Meroz reports on his conversation with Iksel[1] on 14 January. Iksel made several points. (1) His country cannot conceive of Middle East defense without Israel, which is extremely well suited to it, but for strategic reasons negotiations with the Arabs must be completed first. (2) The establishment of a defense organization including Israel and the Arabs would ensure peace between the parties in theory and in practice, but negotiations with the Arabs are proceeding at a snail's pace. (3) Iksel rejected as ridiculous reports in the Turkish press that Turkey has joined the Arab League mutual security pact. (4) Israel's note concerning upgrading of the mission[2] is being handled by the Turkish foreign minister personally.[3]

Notes

1. Settar Iksel, second deputy to the director-general of the Turkish Foreign Ministry. For a detailed report on the conversation, see Meroz to Najar, 14 January 1953, 130.02/2382/2).
2. In a letter dated 7 January 1953, Eytan informed the Turkish foreign minister of the appointment of M. Fischer as Israel Minister in Ankara and requested that the Israeli legation be upgraded to embassy status (130.02/2385/14).
3. On 16 January, the Turkish minister in Israel informed Eytan that his government was considering Israel's proposal, but that it would take time to implement; for the time being his government could not specify a particular date. Eytan interpreted this as a rebuff (see Eytan to Najar, 19 January 1953, 130.02/2385/14).

15. W. Eytan (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 14 January 1953

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2377/1

Eytan instructs Israel's overseas missions how to respond to the case of the Soviet doctors.[1] He calls their attention to the fact that Israel is not mentioned in the Soviet announcement and instructs that for the present no Israeli representative should issue any announcement or response. If Jewish or Zionist leaders seek advice they should be told that Israel has no objection to their making public statements, but they should stress the following: (1) It is absurd to charge the Joint Distribution Committee with organizing such crimes, especially since the Joint has not been active in the Soviet Union since 1938. (2) Jews in the free world are extremely concerned about the fate of their brethren behind the Iron Curtain. (3) The use of the words *Jew* and *Zionist* as pejoratives testifies to the Soviet leadership's need for scapegoats; this merely indicates how far the situation has deteriorated in the Soviet Union. Eytan adds that it is not in Israel's interest to be drawn into an overt quarrel with the U.S.S.R., since it is vital to maintain as intact a position as possible in Moscow and other East Bloc capitals.[2]

Notes

1. The telegram was sent to Israeli missions in Western Europe and to Belgrade. Another telegram was sent to missions in Eastern Europe. See No. 17.
2. Eliashiv's telegram on the Doctors' Plot was not received at the Foreign Ministry until 14 January, apparently after the present telegram was sent. See No. 11 and n. 5 there.
3. In his reply, Eban expressed amazement at Eytan's instructions. He explained that his conscience would not allow him to wait for instructions from Israel before reacting; accordingly at the press conference he had stressed the unofficial nature of his reaction, but that as a Jew he had to denounce any use of antisemitism as a depraved and malignant act. He wrote further that "the absence of a centralized response by Israel is astonishing," in view of the reaction by the United States and the vigorous response by American Jewish organizations. Eban agreed that it was not advisable for each mission to issue its own reaction, but explained that the situation of Israeli representatives in countries with large Jewish communities "will become insufferable if you do not hasten to identify Israel with the Jewish reaction worldwide" (Eban to Eytan, telegram XA437, 14 January 1953, 130.09/2330/19). Cf. Eliashiv's reaction in No. 31.

16. Meeting: A. Eban and G. Rafael–Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan (New York, 14 January 1953)

Report: 93.03/3010/5[1]

Eban broached three problems with Pakistan's foreign minister: Israel-Pakistan relations, Israel-Arab relations, and international problems in the Middle East.

On the first issue, Eban asserted that the time has come for Pakistan to recognize Israel. On the second issue, he pointed out that there exists a possibility of concluding peace between Israel and the Arabs and emphasized that the current situation is detrimental to the latter. Dwelling on the third issue, Eban stressed the need for regional social and economic progress and for cooperation among the countries of the Middle East to enable them to withstand external subversion and repel aggression. He added that increased security in the region would affect the security of India and Pakistan.

Concerning recognition of Israel, Zafrulla Khan answered that his government had retreated from the favorable approach adopted by its predecessor. The previous government had had the ability to normalize relations with Israel, but the current one is weaker and susceptible to public pressure by Muslim extremists. Even he as foreign minister was attacked for his moderation. He explained that even though Pakistan harbors no enmity towards Israel and understands that it is a factor to be reckoned with in the Middle East, and even though it realizes that Pakistan as well as the entire Middle East would reap benefit from the establishment of relations with Israel, he is nevertheless of the opinion that there are no prospects for a rapprochement between Israel and Pakistan in the near future. He emphasized that Pakistan's attitude is not anti-Jewish; the small Jewish community in Karachi was not harmed even during periods of anti-Israel incitement there.

Zafrulla Khan went on to say that inasmuch as Pakistan could serve as an agent of rapprochement between Israel and the Arab states, it ought not to prejudice this status by recognizing Israel. He favors mutual visits by experts, students, and so on, and promised to look into such possibilities when he returns home.

On the issue of Israel-Arab relations he believes that Israel could reach an accord with its neighbors within a period of six months to two years if it found a solution to the refugee and border problems. He agreed that the refugees should be settled in Arab countries and paid compensation; in order to smooth the process, however, a certain number of refugees who wish to return and be loyal citizens of Israel should be allowed to do so. As to borders, he said that where the borders are drawn is not as important as

how to guarantee their integrity. It is important to calm Arab fears of Israeli expansion beyond the armistice lines; hence any border accord must be backed up by international guarantees. In light of the Arabs' declaration that they will never accept the establishment of Israel, it would be wise to make things easier for them by concluding a settlement for 15–20 years only. This would permit Arab leaders to explain to their public that they are acquiescing in the situation on a provisional basis but will not accept it permanently. On various occasions Pakistan has pointed out to the Arabs that they reap no benefit from perpetuating the current situation; on other occasions it has expressed reservations about their extremist proposals. The moment the Arabs evince a willingness to sit down with Israel, Pakistan will try to exert its influence on them. The greatest obstacle to progress in Arab-Israel relations is the lack of an enlightened leadership in the Arab countries. Naguib seems to be the only leader who is concerned for his people; Zafrulla Khan believes that only he can take steps towards a settlement with Israel.

With regard to international problems in the Middle East, Zafrulla Khan repeated his declaration of early 1952 that a Middle East defense organization is inconceivable without the participation of Israel. Since that time his opinion has only been reinforced.

At the end of the conversation Zafrulla Khan expressed his wish for further contacts with representatives of Israel.

Notes

1. The report is taken from Information to Israel Missions Abroad, No. 622, 12 February 1953.
2. Ahmed S. Bokhari, Pakistan's permanent representative at the UN.
3. An Anglo-Jewish businessman.
4. See Vol. 7, No. 59, and n. 3 there, and No. 64.

17. Eastern Europe Division to the Israel Missions in Eastern Europe. 15 January 1953

Coded Tel.: MTA78-80; Outg.: 130.09/2377/1

The Eastern Europe Division reports as follows: (1) Editorials in the Israeli press have condemned the antisemitic nature of the Moscow libel and conjectured that the Soviets are looking to gain favor with the Arab countries and the Germans. After keeping silent for a day, *Al Hamishmar* published a noncommittal and convoluted article. *Kol Ha'am* printed a contemptible editorial to the effect that all decent Jews must be shocked by the crime

committed by Jews. (2) The Western press has published the official communiqué and reported on the article in *Pravda*; it has emphasized and condemned the antisemitic plot and the attempts to curry favor with the Arabs and Germans. (3) In Rangoon,[1] Sharett declared that the Soviet accusations against Jewish doctors prove that the Russians intend to make scapegoats of the Jews. A new era seems to have been opened with the publication of the new Communist version of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, with the Prague trial as its first chapter.[2] (4) The Joint Distribution Committee has issued a statement rejecting the Soviet allegations as totally without foundation. (5) A State Department spokesman has declared that the Moscow allegation is one more stage in the Soviet antisemitic propaganda campaign begun with the Prague trial and noted that the charges reflect a lack of self-confidence. (6) The Knesset will debate the issue on 19 January.[3] (7) Israel was not mentioned in the Soviet announcement, so official Israeli communiqués must not be issued for the present. With the consent of the Prime Minister, it has been decided that Israel's responses will be a function of developments in Moscow.[4]

Notes

1. See No. 3 (Editorial Note).
2. See Vol. 7, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, p. 299.
3. See No. 24 (Editorial Note).
4. Cf. No. 15 and n. 3 there.

18. E. Elath (London) to M. Sharett. 15 January 1953

Coded Tel.: L10444; Inc.: 130.09/2319/3

Elath reports on his conversation with Byroade that day:

(1) Byroade had come to deal with the Iranian affair, but in the meanwhile the problem of the Sudan has arisen. If these issues are resolved they will start working on those of the Suez Canal and the establishment of a regional defense organization. Naguib has promised the United States that Egypt will participate in such an organization if it receives military and economic aid. According to Byroade, the United States cannot extend economic assistance to Egypt, but could provide it with weapons. He believes this is essential to enhance Naguib's personal standing and pave the way for Egypt's entry into the defense organization. Naguib was told that in any case he could receive only a limited quantity of arms, because from a military perspective the U.S. believes it undesirable to introduce fundamental and immediate changes in the equipment deployed by the Egyptian

army. In the future, Egypt will continue to be dependent on arms supplies from Britain.

(2) Byroade said that without Egypt there is little likelihood that other Arab countries will join the regional defense organization. The United States recognizes the importance of the participation of Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa in addition to Britain, France, Turkey, and itself in the Middle East defense organization, but without the Arab countries it would have no political or military value.

(3) In response to Elath's question, Byroade said that the United States would provide Egypt only with armaments that could not be used to attack Israel. Naguib would also be required to make a clear commitment not to use the weapons for aggressive purposes. Byroade argued that the partial armament of Egypt would pose no threat to Israel. He also belittled the danger posed by the British jet planes, although he admitted that the deal had been concluded without consulting the State Department.[1]

(4) Byroade agreed with Elath that economic assistance to Egypt, more than any other means, would contribute to political and social stability in the region, but explained that time is pressing and the survival of the Naguib and Shishakli regimes must be assured immediately, because there are no better ones on the horizon. Hence the armies of these countries must be strengthened so their governments can win public confidence. Elath warned that this might lead to increased nationalist sentiment in Egypt and Syria, aggression against Israel, and a total undermining of security in the entire region.

(5) Byroade reiterated that the State Department understands that the problems of the region cannot be solved in the absence of peace between Israel and the Arabs; in his opinion, however, peace is impossible without a resolution of Egypt's relations with Great Britain and the establishment of a regional defense organization. As for Israel's participation in the organization, he said that the Arabs are likely to construe this as a plot to enable the IDF to deploy in their territory during crises. Hence the groundwork for peace between Israel and its neighbors must be prepared before Israel can join the defense organization. The U.S. government will give this issue top priority after the establishment of a regional defense organization.

(6) Byroade was pessimistic about a solution to the Sudanese problem and expressed his concern that, were no accord reached, Naguib might renew the battle against the British in the Suez Canal Zone. In this eventuality, the United States will not supply arms to Egypt.

(7) Byroade reported that he had reached an agreement with the British Foreign Office concerning Iran. The proposals have been transmitted to the British ambassador in Teheran, who will present them to Musaddeq.

(8) At several junctures in the conversation Byroade declared his sympathy for Israel and stressed that he is safeguarding its interests. At the same

time he requested that Israel recognize that settling Middle East affairs is a U.S. interest. He complained that the English and French are not always cooperative. When Elath asked whether the United States is prepared to accept full responsibility for the region, Byroade replied that in no circumstances does the U.S. wish to send American forces to the region or to play any other role than that of mediator.

(9) Elath draws the Foreign Ministry's attention to the threat to Israel inherent in Byroade's attitude on arms supplies to Egypt. Likewise, attention should be paid to his position on isolating Israel from everything connected with the establishment of a regional defense organization. Israel must on no account agree to such a scheme; an alternative plan of action should be prepared at once.[5]

Notes

1. Cf. No. 4.
2. Maj. Sālih al-Din Mustafa Sālim, member of the Egyptian Free Officers group and of the Revolutionary Command Council; minister of national guidance and minister for Sudanese affairs from June 1953.
3. Loy Henderson, U.S. ambassador to Iran.
4. Muhammad Musaddeq, prime minister and defense minister of Iran.
5. See No. 33.

19. Report on the Meeting between the Delegations of Israel and Syria (Rosh Pinna, 15 January 1953, 11 A.M.)

130.02/2434/3

Representing Israel at the meeting[1] were Aluf Dayan, Segan-Aluf Gaon, Rav-Seren Friedlander, Rav-Seren Moda'i, Seren Reichman, Seren Gerson, and Mr. Tekoah. Syria was represented by Lt. Col. Jadid, Col. Shatīlah, two first lieutenants and one second lieutenant, and a Foreign Ministry official. Vigier and Taxis attended on behalf of the UN.

The instructions given to the Israeli delegation before the meeting were as follows: (1) not to submit special conventions; (2) to agree to conduct discussions in the framework of Article VIII, Paragraph 3 of the armistice agreement;[2] (3) to allow the Syrians to submit their proposals; (4) to agree to changes in the armistice line, not exceeding the maximum concessions marked on the map: (a) giving up the villages of al-Hamma, Nuqeib, and Tawafiq; (b) refusing to accept any Syrian access to the water, with the line to be drawn ten meters east of the shore; (c) agreeing to special irrigation and fishing rights; (d) should the debates bog down on the issue of Dardara,

further instructions will be provided—at this stage no concessions are to be granted in that area.

Dayan opened the discussion and presented Israel's position: (1) Israel is prepared to continue the discussions with Syria in the framework of Article VIII, Paragraph 3 of the armistice agreement. (2) Israel is willing to discuss the problems of the demilitarized zone and any other problems covered by the agreement. (3) Israel is willing to listen to the Syrian proposals.

Jadid proposed that the agenda include the following issues: (1) the Security Council resolutions of 18 May 1951;[5] (2) the status quo in the demilitarized zone; (3) normalization of civilian life; (4) modifications to the armistice line.

Dayan replied: (1) The Israeli delegation has no intention of intervening in the day-to-day problems dealt with by the Mixed Armistice Commission. (2) Security Council resolutions should not be discussed in the context of the Armistice Commission. (3) Israel is prepared to amend the armistice agreement in the framework of Article VIII, Paragraph 3.

Jadid: (1) Modifying the armistice line requires assessing the situation and identifying the problems; only then it will be possible to reach a solution based on a fundamental change or to find a solution to each problem individually. (2) The present situation is that Israel has unilaterally interpreted Article V of the armistice agreement. The lack of progress in the Mixed Armistice Commission is due to Israel's intransigent stand on this issue. (3) The causes of tension must be identified and solved by elimination of the demilitarized zone. (4) It is within the competence of the Mixed Armistice Commission to discuss Security Council resolutions if they have not been implemented by one of the parties.

Dayan: (1) Security Council resolutions are a matter for governments. The delegation to the Mixed Armistice Commission is guided by the armistice agreement and government directives and not directly by Security Council resolutions. (2) Israel is not prepared to discuss or resolve any practical proposals that would lead to modifications of the Armistice agreement. Discussions must be oriented towards the future and not the past.

Jadid: (1) There is a misunderstanding. Syria is not interested in returning to problems of the past but in learning what causes friction so as to know what actions to take in the future. (2) The armistice agreements were drafted in accordance with Security Council resolutions. Hence it is within the jurisdiction of the Mixed Armistice Commission to discuss these agreements and all Security Council resolutions. The Mixed Armistice Commission is the sole contact between the two governments. (3) Concerning Israel's proposal for practical measures, he wishes to formulate a topic for the agenda that would include all hitherto unresolved problems.

Col. Taxis said that if the two sides could settle the problems of the de-

militarized zone and the armistice line—all other issues would be solved. Since both sides agree to settle the problems, they should start discussing them. Dayan agreed with Taxis. Modification of the armistice line would make the other problems easier to solve. Jadid accepted Taxis's proposal, with the proviso that the agenda be left open to include further points. He is willing to modify the armistice line and the agreement.

Jadid went on to say that the two countries must be separated by a physical boundary to prevent military conflicts. The armistice line should follow a natural contour, namely, the water line. Syria proposes drawing it down the center of the Jordan River and the two lakes.

Dayan expressed his astonishment at the Syrian proposal. The present situation with the armistice line and demilitarized zone is preferable to the Syrian proposal. Any new line must be better than its predecessor and satisfy both parties. Today a natural boundary passes along a mountain ridge rather than a water line. Israel is also prepared to discuss a final settlement with the Syrians, in which individual claims, too. will be settled. Dayan suggested the international border of Mandatory Palestine.

Jadid: (1) The Syrian proposals are meant as a provisional rather than a permanent arrangement. (2) There are significant discrepancies between the two outlooks. The intention is to find a settlement that would prevent local friction. The Mandatory governments had imposed the borders on Syria and Palestine; Syria had come out the loser. It is easy to speak of fishing or shipping rights, and so on, but from a military and political perspective the situation is detrimental to Syrian interests. (3) He has listened to Israel's counter-proposals and views them as evidence of a willingness to negotiate. He proposes consulting with his government to obtain instructions on the subject.

Dayan repeated that the line proposed by Israel is the international border and he is willing to consult his government. Jadid said that if the border is to run along a ridge line he would suggest the Galilee hills as the armistice line. As a compromise between the Syrian demand for the Galilee line and Dayan's for the international border—he suggests the middle of the Jordan River.

It was decided to reconvene on 19 January.[7]

After the official meeting there were unofficial talks over lunch. Jadid said: (1) The Syrians want to demarcate the two sides' zones of influences according to the actual state of affairs; that is, Arab villages that are effectively under Syrian rule would be transferred to their zone of influence. (2) The armistice line would run between the two zones of influence. (3) The status of the demilitarized zone would be abolished. No armed forces would enter the zone, and civilian development would be totally unhampered.

Shatīlah added: (1) The Syrians are interested in a quiet border. (2) The villagers of Tawafiq wish to lead a normal farm life. He had suggested to

them that they consult with Israel, with which they have a natural geographic link, in order to till their lands with mechanical implements.

In light of the Syrians' remarks, the Israeli delegation presents the following assessments: (1) The division into zones of influence is intended to spare Syria the embarrassment of having the discussions interpreted as an agreement leading to peace and a final settlement. (2) The demand that the demilitarized zones remain free of armed forces must be rejected: (a) There can be no additional line west of the new armistice line. (b) The international border should remain in force until the final accord is reached. (c) It is Israel's interest to have a free hand in defending the armistice line. (3) Jadid did not mention the water-line issue in the off-the-record talks. It may be inferred from his statements about dividing the zones of influence and irrigation water rights that the Syrians do not intend to reach the water line. (4) To judge by the statements made by Jadid and Shatīlah and by Jadid's behavior during the discussions, the Syrians are truly interested in reaching an accord.

Notes

1. The document is dated 18 January 1953. Cf. Reichman's report of 15 January 1953, 130.02/2434/3.
2. The previous meeting between the Israeli and Syrian delegations took place on 9 October 1952. See Vol. 7, No. 384.
3. The representative of the Syrian Foreign Ministry.
4. Henri Vigier, political adviser to the chief of staff of the UN Truce Supervision Organization in Palestine.
5. The article that stipulated the right of the parties to amend at any time the armistice agreement between them, by mutual agreement. See Vol. 3, Appendix J.
6. *Sic.* Should read "canal."
7. 1951. See Vol. 6, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, p. 140.
8. *Sic.* Should read "the status of the demilitarized zone." Cf. Reichman's report, 15 January 1953, 130.02/2434/3.
9. See No. 23.

20. Z. Shek (Prague) to A. Levavi and Sh. Bentsur. 15 January 1953

Coded Tel.: 11P; Inc.: 130.09/2343/3

Shek reports on the resumption of visits by Jews to the legation in Prague. They come mainly to ask for advice about *aliya* and to express their alarm at the rumors that the legation is about to be closed. Instructions were given to calm and encourage them while maintaining caution. Shek rec-

ommends that the official communiqué announcing his transfer from Prague include the name of his replacement even if there is no intention of actually dispatching the latter to his post. This would prevent undesirable interpretations.

Notes

1. Zeev Shek, chargé d'affaires *a.i.* at the Israel Legation in Czechoslovakia until May 1953.
2. Following the Prague Trial. See Vol. 7, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, p. 299.
3. Yehuda Gera, first secretary at the Israel Legation in Czechoslovakia until June 1953.

21. E. Elath (London) to the British Commonwealth Division. 16 January 1953

Coded Tel.: L10447; Inc.: 130.09/2319/3

Elath reports that the allegations against the Soviet Jewish doctors[1] have had a tremendous impact on all circles in London and continue to preoccupy the press. The unrest among Jewish members of the Communist Party, which began with the Prague trial, continues to grow. The British Medical Association is prepared to respond to the call of its Israeli counterpart and the matter is being dealt with. Major Jewish organizations have adopted protest resolutions; the Embassy is maintaining close contact with them, as per Eytan's instructions.[2] Elath has met with a number of friendly MPs and explained Israel's concern for the fate of Soviet Jews. He found understanding and a wish to help; but nobody knew how. Shinwell related that Labour Party and government circles view the new development in Moscow as a worrisome sign, not only with regard to the fate of the Jews but also as indicating a change in the Soviet Union's domestic and foreign policy. According to this opinion, Moscow believes that an international crisis is imminent, with a danger of war; otherwise the Soviets would not have launched a campaign that will seriously damage their peace propaganda and bring the country's prestige to the low ebb of thirty years ago.

Notes

1. See No. 11.
2. In a telegram to the Israel Missions Abroad (in addition to No. 15), Eytan wrote that "there is extreme concern for the fate of Soviet Jewry, and at present this must be the main tenor" of statements by Jewish and Zionist leaders in the Free World (15 January 1953, 130.09/2377/1).

22. Meeting: J. Linton–J. Tsuchiya. 16 January 1953

Notes

1. The Japanese Foreign Ministry.
2. Izhak Bezner, former director of the Credit and Foreign Trade Division of the Finance Ministry and a member of the trade mission to Tokyo in 1951.

23. Report on the Meeting between the Delegations of Israel and Syria (Syrian Customs House, 19 January 1953, 11 A.M.)[1]

130.02/2343/4

The first part of the meeting was a short official session involving the Israel, Syrian and UN delegations.[2] This was followed by an unofficial meeting in which Taxis, Jadid, Shatīlah, Dayan, and Gaon participated.

Taxis asked the parties to present practical proposals and requested that they refrain from repeating exaggerated demands. It is common knowledge that Israel wants Ein Gev for security reasons and that Syria demands fishing and irrigation rights, exchange of land, and more.

Jadid agreed. He said that Syria is requesting a geographical solution that would put an end to the constant clashes in the demilitarized zone, as well as its rights in the area. Were Israel to stubbornly insist on retroactive claims like Ein Gev no solution could be reached.

Taxis said that talk about Ein Gev is unrealistic and that Israeli public opinion would be strongly opposed to this proposal. Concessions must be made to attain peace.

Jadid said: (1) The problem of Ein Gev need not stand in the way of a settlement. (2) The issue is not peace but rather implementation of Article V of the armistice agreement. (3) In fact, the armistice agreement does not exist at present, although neither is there a state of war. (4) Syria is abiding by the armistice agreement, but the paragraphs on the demilitarized zones were implemented according to Israel's unilateral interpretation. Syria's options are either to revive the agreement and the Mixed Armistice Commission or to determine a new armistice line. It has good intentions and no interest in facing provocations.

Dayan agreed with the Syrian argument: (1) A demarcation line must be found that is acceptable to both parties or each party must inform its government that there is no possibility of reaching an agreement. (2) Problems should once again be resolved by the Mixed Armistice Commission, which would implement the armistice literally. There is a problem posed by different interpretations of the text of the agreement. (3) He proposes draw-

ing a new line that would divide the demilitarized zone between the two sides and change its status. In fact this would end the demilitarization of the zone. (4) There is no point in continuing the discussions with the Syrians if they are raising the issue of Ein Gev at this stage. He does not believe that the Syrians should gain territory beyond the international border, but would agree to a settlement that places certain territories under Syrian control, based on the present situation and without fundamental changes. True, this goes against Israel's principles, but it would not be a final settlement. (5) When more important changes are discussed, Israel could speak of including the Banias in Israel and Syria of incorporating the Ein Gev area in its territory. (6) The question of individual rights should be left open. On this issue, the satisfactory arrangement reached in the armistice agreements with Jordan and Egypt should be borne in mind.

Taxis raised a practical proposal of his own to accelerate the discussions, adding that it does not bind the parties: (1) Syria has no special requests concerning water rights in the area between the Hula and the Sea of Galilee, apart from the demands of the residents of Buteiha and Shamalne. The line in this area would be drawn: (a) through the middle of the Jordan River, with Syria undertaking to allow Israeli irrigation projects; (b) or along the eastern bank of the Jordan, with Israel undertaking to allow irrigation of Arab lands. The problem of the 28 dunams east of the Jordan could be settled by selling them to Israel. (2) Under the terms of this proposal, Israel would gain between one thousand and eleven hundred dunams of prime Arab-owned land in Khuri and al-Baqara. Syria must be compensated for these lands—for example, by Dardara and its lands east of the Hula, irrigation and fishing rights, and financial compensation. At this juncture he proposes discussing the water supply to Kibbutz Shamir. He suggests that his proposal be adopted as a basis for discussion and that the central region be discussed first.

Jadid accepted Taxis's proposal: (1) The demarcation line should be discussed separately for each region. (2) In the central region, the line would be drawn down the middle of the Jordan River, with the Syrians guaranteeing Israel's right to use the river and lakes for irrigation, as in the past. (3) Syria is prepared to exchange the lands of Khuri and al-Baqara for lands in the Dardara region of equal area and value. It requests guarantees that any land drained at a later stage will be handed over to Syria, up to the new water line. Syria also stands to lose the Shamalne lands.

Dayan replied that Syria is repeating its original proposal for a line drawn down the middle of the Jordan; hence there is nothing to discuss on this issue. He said that he is prepared to open discussions on Jadid's second proposal, namely, a line along the eastern bank of the Jordan.

Taxis said that the Syrians are proposing the middle of the river whereas Israel is proposing a line five to ten meters east of the bank; the shoreline itself would be a compromise.

Jadid said that he agrees to a line running along the shore, but not one centimeter inland; Syria would commit itself not to use more water than hitherto. One of the rationales for their claim is military, that is, to prevent any possibility of building bridges and military structures; the second is to prevent the local residents from being involved in new disputes.

Dayan said that Israel needs ten meters to allow for the use of mechanical implements. He also asked whether the Syrians would object, were the line drawn along the eastern bank, to the continuation of Israel's irrigation projects, if irrigation rights previously enjoyed by the Arabs were guaranteed.

Jadid replied that Syria promises not to oppose any irrigation project drawing on the water of the Jordan, according to the outline proposed by Dayan.

Dayan sought to clarify whether the intention is to evacuate the inhabitants of Khuri, al-Baqara, and Dardara. Jadid wished first to define the borders of the central region as Darbashiya in the north and the Sea of Galilee in the south. Dayan agreed.

Jadid stated that monetary compensation was out of the question and demanded compensation in land. He wants a demarcation line that would guarantee both sides' security. The border would be the water line; should the Hula recede, the border would move with it.

Dayan: What would be the status of the regions after the agreement?

Jadid: Syria is talking about a new armistice line and is not interested in demilitarized zones. The new armistice line would separate between two sovereign territories. There would merely be restrictions on military operations, such as troop movements and fortifications.

Dayan clarified the following points for the record: (1) The new line would transfer more land to Israeli control than to Syrian control. (2) Land cannot be exchanged on an equal basis, because areas of equal size are not available. (3) If the Syrians stand firm on their demands, the demilitarized zones will remain as they are. (4) He is not authorized to discuss the proposed exchanges. No one had thought of land-for-land compensation. He proposes dividing the regions, with payment of compensation to residents who leave.

Taxis pointed out that as chairman of the Mixed Armistice Commission he cannot agree to the arbitrary expropriation of land. The entire demilitarized zone, including the southern region, must be taken into account in a solution to the problem of territorial exchanges.

Jadid asked outright about Israeli policy on Dardara.

Dayan replied: (1) The Government of Israel is strongly opposed to abandoning any Israeli settlement. He is personally inclined to agree to ceding Dardara if a suitable solution can be found to the issue of the demilitarized zones. (2) He asked whether Syria would agree to draw the line on the eastern bank if Israel agreed to cede Dardara. Jadid agreed to submit the proposal to his government.

It was decided that both sides would consult their governments and reconvene on 22 January.[6]

Notes

1. Document dated 23 January 1953.
2. The first part of the document has been omitted. It contains a report on a short official meeting between the Israeli, Syrian, and UN delegations, at the start of which Dayan proposed that the delegation heads convene alone, with or without the chairman. Jadid accepted the proposal but proposed that his deputy, Lieut.-Col. Shatīlah and the chairman, representing the UN, also be present.
3. Lieut.-Col. Roy Tillotson, UN observer.
4. See No. 30.

24. Editorial Note

Government Statement on the Accusations against the Jewish Physicians in the Soviet Union, Summing Up the Knesset Debate of 19 January 1953

On 19 January 1953, the Knesset conducted an urgent debate on "the disturbing reports concerning the fate of the Jews in the Soviet Union."

On 18 January the Government discussed the wording of its statement to be made in the Knesset the next day. Ben-Gurion and Sharett were absent. Pinhas Lavon, the acting Foreign Minister, proposed that the Government statement include three elements: (1) a declaration that Israel would find the appropriate opportunity to bring before the UN the matter of incitement against the Jewish people and its organizations; (2) emphasis on the right of Jews to emigrate from Eastern European countries; (3) a declaration that the Government will view any incitement against the Jewish people conducted by Israeli Jews acting in the service of a foreign power as a hostile act towards the state. Several ministers objected to Lavon's proposal. Most prominent among them was Moshe Shapira, who urged caution and an avoidance of empty declarations that had no real force. He opposed a statement from the rostrum of the Knesset that Israel would bring the matter before the UN; he agreed to action against Communism in Israel but opposed a declaration to this effect in the Knesset. Some ministers (Sapir, Rosen, Serlin) agreed with Shapira that no reference should be made to a fifth column in Israel, but dissented as to the need for a sharp reaction to incitement against the Jewish people. The Government decided to let Sharett draft the statement.

In the Knesset on 19 January, following speeches by the representatives of the various factions, the Foreign Minister delivered the Government

statement and proposed that the issue be referred to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. The Knesset accepted his proposal. The text of his statement follows:

> The communiqué on the Prague trial, read in the Knesset on behalf of the Government on 25 November 1952, stated as follows:
>
> > *At this time our hearts go out to the masses of our Jewish brethren who have been severed from the body of the nation, cut off from any live contact with the State of Israel and other segments of the Jewish people, and have been condemned to bear their fate in isolation and quarantine. Perhaps our voice will not reach them, but we are anxious for them, for their well-being and their future.*
>
> The fears that spawned this anxiety have been corroborated, and are now shared by the entire Jewish people.
>
> On 13 January, an official communiqué was issued in Moscow concerning the detention of nine Soviet physicians, seven of whom bore recognizable Jewish names, for having ostensibly plotted and carried out abominable and shocking acts of murder at the instigation of a respected American Jewish organization, which was depicted as being a band of bloodthirsty spies. This communiqué appalled world opinion, which viewed it and its possible repercussions as an atrocious propaganda and terror campaign by the Soviet regime against its Jewish subjects.
>
> This time, too, as in the Prague trial, the accusations are quite untenable. To accuse an entire group of reputable physicians of deliberately killing patients under their care is an act that civilized persons cannot countenance. Even if one ignores the monstrous and inhuman nature of the crime itself, the blatant fabrication used to explain its motives is sufficient to refute and disprove the entire accusation. This lie—the presentation of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, world-renowned for its generous philanthropic activities, as an international organ of espionage and assassination—was obvious to everyone.
>
> In the regime that prevails in the Soviet Union and its associated states, the judiciary is an obedient arm of the authorities and an instrument of their policy. Like all other government acts, the interrogation of crimes against the regime itself and their public condemnation are deliberate, never random. It was no coincidence that eleven of the fourteen defendants in the Prague trial were Jewish, or that only Jewish witnesses were called in this trial. The prosecution emphasized this endlessly, drawing far-reaching conclusions from this fact. Nor is it a coincidence that seven of the nine accused in Moscow and two of their alleged "controllers" are Jews. The malice towards Zionism and the State of Israel that underlay the Prague trial and the malice towards a world-famous Jewish organization that has been linked with the case of the Moscow physicians also testify to a deliberate policy and clearly define its objectives.

In practice, in the propaganda activities currently being conducted throughout the Communist bloc, the two cases are joined by their alleged common root in the machinations of Jewish organizations, first and foremost of the Zionist movement.

The fact that outside the borders of that bloc the communiqué issued in Moscow is received as a total pack of lies is proof that this initiative by the authorities is meant for internal consumption only. One may conclude that its objective is, first, to sow panic in the large Jewish community of the Soviet Union and in those of its allies, and second, to prepare the masses in these countries for the possibility of official action against the Jews.

The State of Israel cannot stand silent in the face of any attempt by any political actor whatsoever to denigrate the name of the Jewish people or in face of the threat to Jewish communities, wherever they are.

The Government of Israel has always viewed its friendly relations with the Soviet Union as one of the mainstays of its international status and as a valuable asset for the entire Jewish people. It observes with deep regret and serious concern the malignant policy of hostility towards Jews that has been officially adopted by the Soviet Union, a line that must awaken the sharpest indignation and condemnation on the part of the State of Israel and the Jewish people throughout the world.

In the consciousness of the Jewish people, the Moscow Plot stands in a direct line with the medieval accusations that Jews poisoned wells and murdered Christian children for ritual reasons. It reminds all of us of the Beilis trial, instigated by the Czarist regime—with the difference that that regime did not force Beilis to confess to the crime and allowed him to be represented by the leading attorneys of Russia. The citizens of Israel and Jews throughout the world are convinced that the accused are innocent, even if they were forced to confess to acts they did not commit. By the same token, all who are familiar with the activity of the Joint are confident of the absolute purity of its actions and are revolted by the slander that has been leveled against it.

The Government of Israel will condemn, at the United Nations and from every other platform, the incitement being conducted by the Communist countries against the Jewish people and the vilification of its authorized organizations and will sound the alarum for the danger that threatens the well-being of millions of Jews in these countries.

The Government of Israel will continue to assert, and with renewed vigor, the right of all Jews whose hearts yearn for Zion to leave their countries and immigrate to the State of Israel.

Any attempt made by individuals or public bodies in Israel to justify and defend incitement against Jews, which threatens their safety, in any country whatsoever, will be considered by the Government to be a hostile act towards the state, and all necessary and relevant conclusions will be drawn therefrom.

(*Divrei ha-Knesset,* Second Session of the Second Knesset, Vol. III, pp. 481–94; for the Cabinet debate, see Ben-Gurion to cabinet members, 20 January 1953, IDF Archives, 532/73/164.)

25. A. Lourie to W. Eytan. 20 January 1953

Notes

1. A meeting of the Israeli delegation to the United Nations on 15 January. For a summary of the meeting, see 130.03/1963/2.
2. Henry Cabot Lodge, the new permanent representative of the United States at the United Nations.
3. The reference is to the Prague Trial. See Vol. 7, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, p. 299.
4. The reference is to two separate items on the agenda submitted by the representatives of Poland and Czechoslovakia to the second session of the Seventh UN General Assembly. The Czechs called for a discussion of U.S. intervention in the internal affairs of the East Bloc countries and China; the Poles proposed discussing ways to bolster peace and strengthen friendship among nations *(Yearbook of the United Nations,* 1953, pp. 253–58). On the General Assembly's discussion of these items and Israel's position, see No. 108 and n. 2 there, and No. 165 (Editorial Note).
5. See No. 10.

26. E. Elath to Lord Henderson. 21 January 1953

Note

1. Yahil and Josephthal, who took part in the meeting with Lord Henderson.

27. M. Sharett (Tel Aviv) to W. Eytan. 21 January 1953

Orig.: 130.02/2413/24

Sharett responds to a memorandum by Darom proposing a change in Israel's attitude to Spain. [1] Sharett supports continuation of the status quo. He believes that public opinion in Israel and the Diaspora would not accept such a change, nor would Israel reap any benefit in the international arena. The determining factor is that Franco's regime was a faithful ally of Nazism and Fascism and that in Spain, unlike Germany, Italy, and Japan, there has been no change of regime.

Note

1. The reference is to a memorandum by the head of the division, Avraham Darom. Darom wrote that he agreed with the many Foreign Ministry staffers who felt it was time for Israel to reconsider its policy towards Spain, investigate the possibility of establishing normal relations, and take the first steps in this direction. His considerations were: (a) Spain is gradually entering "the family of nations." (b) Israel should not swim against the current. (c) Israel has gradually changed its attitude towards Japan, Austria, and Germany, and it seems pointless to persist in its traditional policy towards Spain. (d) It is in Israel's interest to maintain normal relations with the Mediterranean countries, particularly in view of the consolidation of a hostile Arab-Muslim bloc along the southern and most of the eastern shore of the Mediterranean. (e) Franco's Spain, for all its shortcomings, had provided asylum to Jewish refugees during the war; Israeli public opinion is ripe for accepting Spain as it is. (f) Establishing relations with Spain would make it easier to establish ties with Portugal. (g) There is scope for developing commercial relations with Spain (130.02/2413/24; see also the other correspondence in this file).

28. F. E. Shinnar (Cologne) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 21 January 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2354/1

Shinnar reports on his talk with Hallstein and Blankenhorn. They informed him that the trade delegation would not leave for Egypt until 31 January. The Bonn government will not submit the reparations agreement to the Bundesrat until a week after the start of the negotiations in Egypt. This schedule will permit ratification by the Bundesrat on 20 February. If all goes as planned, the Bundestag will add its approval in the second half of March. At that time, the German ambassador in Cairo will inform Egypt that Germany plans to propose to Israel that a neutral Swedish observer be appointed to monitor that only commodities mentioned in the agreement are sent to Israel, and not military equipment.

Shinnar replied that the prolongation of the negotiations and the failure to keep Adenauer's promises to Israel have created an intolerable situation for Israel. Pressure and resentment are growing at home and in important circles abroad, and Israel cannot withstand them. Linking ratification to negotiations with the Arabs is not justified and is not based on the written accord. The Arabs will continue to procrastinate, realizing that to date they have been successful in deferring the agreement. Shinnar made it clear that Israel does not accept the proposal for an observer but might possibly agree to another proposal on this topic. At the end of the conversation the German participants agreed that Shinnar meet with the head of the delegation leaving for Cairo and attempt to persuade him not to view submission

of the agreement for parliamentary ratification before the start of his delegation's negotiations as having a negative influence on the prospects for those negotiations. If the head of the delegation agreed, the agreement would be submitted to the Bundesrat on 27 January; in that case, there is a chance it could be approved by 20 February.

All participants agreed on the importance of Nahum Goldmann's coming to Germany to coordinate efforts aimed at speedy ratification of the agreement.

Notes

1. See No. 13 and n. 2 there.
2. Ludger Westrick, secretary of state in the West German Economic Ministry.
3. Hermann J. Abs, German banker who headed the West German delegation to the 1952 London Conference on German External Debts.
4. Günter Pawelke, West German ambassador to Egypt from October 1952.
5. See Eytan's letter of 23 January 1953 (130.02/2417/7) for a report on the outcome of these and other conversations conducted by Shinnar.
6. Giora Josephthal, joint head of the Israel delegation to the reparations negotiations.
7. Erich Ollenhauer, chairman of West German Social Democratic Party and its Bundestag caucus.
8. See Eytan to Goldmann, telegram YA12, 22 January 1953, 130.09/2330/13.

29. Memorandum by Sh. Rosenne. 22 January 1953

Note

1. Comay wrote Eytan that he was troubled by Dayan's proposal to Jadid at their last meeting that the armistice line run along the eastern bank of the Jordan (see No. 23). He was particularly concerned that this proposal might give Syria riparian status with regard to the Jordan River and the two lakes, with all that that implies in international law. He urgently requested the opinion of the legal adviser (20 January 1953, 130.16/2953/10).

30. Report on the Meeting between the Delegations of Israel and Syria (Rosh Pinna, 22 January 1953, 11 A.M.)

Notes

1. The document is dated 26 January.
2. The list of participants has been omitted here. Attending were Dayan, Gaon, Jadid, Shatīlah, Taxis, and Vigier.

3. See No. 23.
4. The Government did not receive its first report on the talks with the Syrians until 25 January. See No. 34, n. 5.
5. See No. 44.
6. See No. 53.

31. Report by Sh. Eliashiv (Moscow). 22 January 1953

130.02/2457/14

Eliashiv attempts to explain the implications of the "Doctors' Plot."[1]

(1) This is an act directed against Soviet Jews; one of its aims is to totally sever their connection with world Jewry. It is a direct continuation of the Prague trial. The Soviets seized on the Joint Distribution Committee because no Jewish public organization has been active in the Soviet Union for years.

(2) The entire campaign of defamation is directed against Zionism and not against the State of Israel. The article in *Novoe Vremia*[3] did not allege that the Israel mission engaged in espionage but rather that the World Zionist Organization used its agents who have infiltrated the legation.

(3) The campaign against the doctors has been going on for a while. The legation staff has been hearing of dismissals of Jewish doctors and their disappearance since 1951. The arrests were not made all at once.

(4) Anti-Jewish activity is one objective of this campaign, but not the main one. In a memorial speech for Lenin, the lecturer mentioned the doctors' affair, but not the Joint or the charge against an international Jewish organization. Moreover, repeated allegations in the press concerning the negligence of the institutions responsible for internal security may perhaps indicate that the crux is a struggle among various factions within the Soviet leadership. It may be that Malenkov[6] is orchestrating this campaign as a means to eliminate his rivals.

(5) Another aim of this campaign is to intensify police surveillance of the population, instill dread, and create a situation that would render any anti-regime activity quite impossible. The whole issue may be related to concern about U.S. escalation of the Cold War under the new president. It is also possible that many soft spots requiring severe measures in all aspects of life have been uncovered in the country. Signs of this have come to light in the many cases of deviation and corruption in the various republics.

(6) It is hard to understand why they had singled out physicians. Some believe that this is a continuation of the campaign against intellectuals that began some time ago and progresses from one profession to the next. Another opinion, hard to credit, is that the state of medicine in the Soviet Union is so low as to provoke dissatisfaction and anger among the general

population, so the Jews are being blamed for its failure. Still another version claims that the primitive imagination of the Russian people has always harbored suspicion of members of this profession; this explains why they are prepared to believe statements that the Free World considers to be mendacious and shocking.

Eliashiv concludes that as long as the Soviets have not explicitly implicated the State of Israel, Israel should refrain from any response and carefully avoid any action that might cause it direct harm.[7]

Notes

1. See No. 11.
2. *Aynikayt* (Unity), the organ of the Jewish Antifascist Committee, was published from June 1942 to November 1948, first in Kuibyshev and later in Moscow.
3. Eliashiv's telegram reads as follows: "Today's *Novaya Vremya* carries an article by Minaiev entitled, 'The Zionist Agency of American Espionage,' which is the zenith of malice towards Zionism. Unlike the daily press, *Novoe Vremia* constantly refers to the Joint as a Zionist organization. It attacks various persons, including Joseph Schwartz as an American agent, Eban and Shiloah as employees of British Intelligence, and Eban for helping the Anglo-Americans torpedo Soviet peace initiatives at the United Nations. He says that the chief functionaries of Israel, Ben-Gurion, Sharett, and Shiloah, the mastermind of Israeli espionage, and other Zionist leaders do the State Department's bidding. He gives a distorted historical review of the annals of Zionism, and mentions, *inter alia,* a genocidal war against Arabs in Palestine, and their eviction and expulsion to the desert. An entire section is devoted to the Prague Trial and the activities of Avriel and Kubovy, although my name is omitted. The article ends by threatening vengeance against those who inspired the murderers and disclosure of the activities of the fifth column in countries of the 'democratic' camp, which also includes the bourgeois Jewish nationalists" (Eliashiv to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 21 January 1953, telegram QIA374, 130.09/2325/6).
4. Arie Aroch, first secretary at the Israel Legation in Moscow.
5. Probably the journalist Ralph Parker.
6. Georgiy Maksimilianovitch Malenkov, member of the politburo of the Soviet Communist Party and deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers. In March 1953 he was named chairman of the Council of Ministers and a member of the party presidium.
7. Cf. No. 15 and n. 3 there, and No. 17.

32. United States Division (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 22 January 1953

Coded Tel.: IW1000; Inc.: 130.09/2309/12

The director of the United States Division reports that consultations with the Foreign Minister produced the following decisions: (1) The public and

political campaign against arms supplies to Arab countries should be continued. (2) The point to be made is that no regional organization should be established as long as there is no peace between Israel and the Arab states. (3) The Americans should be informed that strengthening Israel is their most secure investment and ought not to be linked to the proposed defense organization. The director asks what the Embassy plans to do in connection with item (1), when it intends to submit the military assistance note to the new administration, whether they have begun to "educate" Dulles and his department, and whether Silver is privy to this matter.[1]

Note

1. The Embassy's reply to the telegram was as follows: "We are pursuing the public campaign we began about six weeks ago. Points (2) and (3) are raised whenever we discuss the subject. We are considering submitting a military assistance note on 7 February, after the ambassador's return. We have begun 'educating' Dulles and Smith by sending them the ambassador's peace plan and an assurance that we are continuing to act according to the plan, and by requesting a meeting between them and the ambassador after Dulles returns from Europe and the ambassador to Washington. Silver is not yet in the know" (telegram WIA855, 23 January 1953, 93.01/2209/2).

33. E. Elath (London) to D. Ben-Gurion and M. Sharett. 23 January 1953

Coded Tel.: L10478; Inc.: 130.02/2449/1

Elath draws the following conclusions from his talks in London in recent weeks: (1) Britain and Egypt will eventually reach an agreement on the Sudan. It may be assumed that the State Department will exert pressure on both countries to do so. Naguib, too, has no interest in renewing the armed conflict, which would merely strengthen radical elements in Egypt. An agreement would pave the way for negotiations on the Suez Canal and Egypt's participation in the regional defense organization. Egypt's participation would permit other Arab countries to join and remove the last obstacles in the way of arms supplies to the Arabs by Britain and the United States. (2) Israel cannot prevent such a development. (3) If this assessment is correct, Israel faces a new era of Arab ascendancy, the like of which has not existed since the end of World War II. After it reaches a settlement with Britain and the regional defense organization is established, Egypt will become the darling of the Western countries, represented at the headquarters of the organization and receiving military and economic aid.

(4) In such a case there is patent danger that Israel would be isolated. Byroade told Elath that the United States intends to set about making peace between Israel and the Arabs only after the regional defense organization has been set up. It stands to reason that at the suitable moment pressure will be exerted on Israel to make significant border concessions in the interests of peace. Israel's political isolation, shaky economic situation, and absolute dependence on the United States will make such pressure more effective.

A plan must be devised to forestall this danger and to react should such a situation arise. Elath proposes: (a) that the Prime Minister or the Foreign Minister make a direct approach to Churchill. To this end he suggests that one of them come to London. (b) He proposes weighing the possibility of a similar visit to Eisenhower. (c) Churchill must be approached with concrete proposals and informed of Israel's positive attitude towards Middle East defense. (d) Elath believes that an expression of Israel's willingness to join the defense organization will not suffice to make amends for Israel's past mistake when it rejected the invitation to become a member. Direct discussions with Churchill and Eisenhower might be able to ensure Israeli interests before it joined the organization. Israel can demand and perhaps receive certain guarantees as to the method to be adopted by the Western Powers to achieve peace between Israel and the Arabs, with the goal of preventing snags when the time comes. (e) He proposes re-examining Israel's policy towards the Arabs and deciding what concessions it would be willing to make should direct negotiations begin under pressure by the Great Powers and with their mediation. The Israeli strategy of calling for direct negotiations is effective as long as the Arabs are opposed to them; however, were negotiations to begin in the wake of the scenario sketched by Elath, Israel should be prepared to provide clear answers about the conditions in which it would agree to sign a peace treaty. It would be advisable to declare at a suitable juncture that Israel has no designs on its neighbors' territory and has no plans to attack them. Arab fears of Israeli expansionism are taken seriously by Western diplomats. It is in Israel's interest to allay such fears, since a statement to this end would involve no concessions or withdrawal.[1] (f) Finally, Elath proposes that Israel insist on being compensated in the form of increased U.S. military and economic aid, easier terms for acquiring arms from Britain, reinforcement of the Tripartite Declaration, and the like.

Notes

1. See, for example, No. 18.
2. In his reply to Elath, dated 2 March 1953, Eban stated that in his opinion the way to surmount all the dangers described in the telegram is "to adopt a bold initiative on

the issues of peace and regional defense" (93.08/355/29). He presented his plan in detail in a telegram appended to the letter (see No. 109). See also No. 134.

34. M. Sharett (Tel Aviv) to D. Ben-Gurion. 23 January 1953

Orig.: IMDEA 230.72/1173

Sharett protests to Ben-Gurion that the announcement by the IDF spokesman concerning the abrogation of the agreement with Jordan[1] was made public without consultation with the Foreign Ministry. At the last Government meeting,[2] the ministers had raised the issue of relations with Jordan. Sharett wishes to clarify the matter with Ben-Gurion before the next Government meeting. He adds that he himself is opposed to any Israeli initiative to rescind the agreement.

As for the talks with the Syrians, Sharett expresses his concern that they are based on Israeli territorial concessions with no *quid pro quo*.[3] Even though the military experts have advised Sharett that the concessions were worthwhile, because in exchange Israel would be permitted free use of the Jordan waters, he wishes to raise certain problems that may not have been considered, such as the effect on Israeli public opinion should it ever come to light that Israel renounced territory without compensation and whether this might not serve as a dangerous precedent for future negotiations. Sharett wishes to discuss this matter too with Ben-Gurion before the next Cabinet session.[5]

Notes

1. On 20 January, Segan-Aluf Chaim Gaon met with the military correspondents and informed them of a deterioration in the security situation along the border with Jordan. He accused the Arab Legion of organizing infiltration and attacks on IDF soldiers in Beit Nabala, Beit Surik, and Khirbat al-Qeryetein, and of violating the local commanders' agreement of 29 December 1952 (see Vol. 7, No. 521) on returning soldiers who crossed the border within 48 hours. Gaon reported that a group of soldiers who had inadvertently crossed the border on 4 January 1953 had not yet been returned, and that initially the Jordanians had even refused to admit their capture. In view of the Jordanian intransigence, Israel announced that "it could not remain bound to a one-sided agreement that ties its hands and views the agreement as null and void." In his warning about the security situation along the border, Gaon made it plain that Israel "will not tolerate such acts, and will intensify its security alertness and active defense." He added, however, that Israel was continuing its efforts to find a common language of peace with its neighbors (see *Davar* and the *Jerusalem Post*, 21 January 1953.)
2. At the Government meeting of 21 January, Minister Shapira raised the abrogation of the anti-infiltration agreement. He was furious that the Government had not been

informed before the IDF spokesman notified the press. Since it then transpired, according to Shapira, "that the matter is extremely serious," he asked that someone in the Government review the situation. Eshkol, who was acting prime minister, promised to contact the ministers of defense and foreign affairs so that one of them would provide the necessary information (see n. 5 below).

3. See No. 23; compare No. 29.
4. For the proposal by Simcha Blass, adviser on water problems, see Vol. 7, No. 424.
5. 25 January 1953. The two met in Tiberias after a Government meeting that morning. See No. 38 (Editorial Note).

35. E. Elath (London) to M. Comay. 23 January 1953

Coded Tel.: L10483; Inc.: 130.09/2319/3

Elath reports on his talk with Eden,[1] who presented him with an *aide-mémoire*[2] about the aircraft deal. Eden stressed that this was not an official reply to the Israeli note,[3] but merely an explanation of the British position in the aftermath of that note. Elath assumes that Eden intended to express displeasure that Israel had given publicity to its note in the United States and Britain. Eden pointed out that the release of jet planes to Middle Eastern countries is not indicative of British policy and does not create a precedent for the release of additional aircraft of this type to the Arabs. He added that Israel could purchase more planes than it was originally offered. He explained that Israel faces no military danger from the presence of such craft in Arab air forces. He could understand Israel's fears were the Arabs receiving bombers rather than fighters. Eden added that no political or military intentions lay behind the supply of the aircraft; it was meant to prepare the ground for negotiations with Naguib, which are vital for Britain and its allies. Elath repeated the arguments concerning the security, economic, and political risks involved in the supply of planes and armaments to the Arabs before they agree to make peace with Israel. When Eden asked why Israel had targeted Britain rather than other countries who supply weapons to the Arabs, Elath replied that Eban had approached Acheson,[5] who claimed he knew nothing of British weapons sales to the Arabs. Eden responded that Acheson's reply was inaccurate; the British had given the Americans prior notification of their decision. The Americans are no less interested than the British in reaching an agreement with Naguib on the Sudan, to enable them to deal with the problem of the Suez Canal. When Elath asked about the extent of the linkage between the Canal issue and the regional defense organization, Eden said that there is coordination between Britain and the United States on this issue. As for Israel's role, Eden stated that the report of the British military delegation that had visited Israel is still being studied by the Chiefs of Staff; the Foreign Office is not yet party to their conclusions.

Elath raised Germany's delay in ratifying the reparations agreement. He asked whether Eden could help by exerting pressure on Adenauer to expedite the issue. Eden promised to send instructions at once to the British High Commissioner in Berlin and to help as far as he could.

Concerning Soviet Jews, Eden was of the opinion that the change in Soviet policy is not designed simply to curry favor with the Arabs. He promised to send Elath a confidential memorandum expressing his views on the matter. He also believes that Hungary will be the first country to institute systematic persecution.

Eden asked that their discussion of the supply of aircraft be kept confidential. They agreed to tell the press that they had talked about various topical issues.

Notes

1. The meeting was held at Elath's initiative. Already on 13 January Elath had approached the British Foreign Office requesting an interview with the foreign secretary. Eden's advisers cautioned him to avoid such a meeting, since Elath intended to raise the issue of the planes. Only after Elath managed to persuade Bowker of the necessity of such a meeting did Strang agree to arrange one. (See internal correspondence of the British Foreign Office, 13, 16, and 19 January 1953, PRO, FO371/104215.)
2. See No. 36.
3. See No. 6.
4. See Vol. 7, No. 432.
5. See No. 4.
6. See Vol. 7, Nos. 379, 380, and 385.
7. Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, British High Commissioner for Germany.

36. *Aide-Mémoire* from the Government of the United Kingdom. 23 January 1953

Note

1. See No. 6.

37. M. Sharett (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Mission in Cologne. 25 January 1953

Coded Tel. Inc.: 130.09/2354/2

Sharett announces his intention to cable a personal note to Adenauer in which he will confront him with the situation created by German procras-

tination in ratifying the reparations agreement.[1] Even if Goldmann intervenes, he believes there is still reason to exert direct and official Israeli pressure on Adenauer at the level of the signatories to the agreement. Sharett asks for Yahil's opinion on the matter.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 28.
2. Shinnar and Yahil cabled Sharett that in principle they favored sending the letter but recommended waiting until after Goldmann's meeting with Adenauer, set for 26 January (25 January 1953, 130.09/2354/1). See No. 39.

38. Editorial Note

Government Discussion of the Situation along the Israel-Jordan Border and of the Talks with the Syrians, 25 January 1953

At a meeting of the Government on 25 January, chaired by Sharett, Dayan reviewed the situation along the Jordanian border. He reported an increase in infiltration and robbery along that border during the last month, the result of the transfer of control over the West Bank to the local Palestinians. Unlike the Jordanians, he said, the Palestinian Arabs truly hate Israel. The problem was not the Arab Legion, but the need for a decision by the Jordanian government to prevent the inhabitants from crossing the border. It is clear, he said, that we are dealing with a pernicious evil, but we must be patient, because it will not soon disappear. Only a permanent settlement with all our neighbors would solve the problem.

Sharett said that one could assume that even a peace agreement would not immediately bring about order and security, so long as thousands of people who were uprooted from their homes have not yet set down roots elsewhere. Sharett expressed confidence that the IDF was doing everything it could to maintain vigilance and would certainly find the appropriate moment to retaliate for the infiltrations. All the same, the reaction must be aimed against the direct perpetrators of the act. He added that Israel must tread carefully and act with discretion vis-à-vis the UN observers. Israel should refrain from talk about abrogating the local commanders' agreement; rather, it should claim that the other side was violating the agreement while Israel was seeking its implementation. The Western powers should be approached and asked to put pressure on Jordan. Sharett added that the Foreign Ministry had already briefed the embassies on this matter.

The progress of the talks with the Syrians was discussed next. Sharett enumerated the outstanding issues between Israel and Syria related to

implementation of the armistice agreement, particularly those of the demilitarized zone and Israeli sovereignty there. He admitted that in practice Israel did not have complete control of the zone and that attempts to exercise control had met with obstacles. UN personnel assert that Israel may not operate in the demilitarized zone until peace has been achieved and the question of sovereignty resolved. Sharett further explained that the Syrian claim that the line of demarcation should be the water line—that is, the middle of the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee—threatened implementation of the Benot-Yaaqov project. Because the complicated and unstable situation adversely affected both sides, Israel and Syria had a common interest in solving the issue by specifying a line to partition the demilitarized zone and eliminate it. Focusing on this objective, however, could not in itself lead to an agreement; this was why the two delegations were negotiating. Since some prospects of a positive outcome had been discerned recently, Ben-Gurion and Sharett believed it desirable to lay the issues before the Government before hard and fast decisions were taken at the talks. Sharett spoke of the possibility of eliminating the demilitarized zone or modifying the armistice line, with the chance that Israel would receive 70% of the area. He noted the water problem, which would be an issue in any form of settlement. Israel conditioned any agreement on full control of all water resources; even should there be places where the Syrians reached the river, Israel would be free to use the Jordan for irrigation, divert part of its flow, alter its course, and the like. Senior echelons in the Defence and Foreign Ministries believe it would be in Israel's interest to sign an agreement if these conditions were met, for the following reasons: (1) Without an agreement, Israel would almost certainly lose more territory in the demilitarized zones. (2) Such an agreement would enable Israel to develop its water plans without hindrance. Israel, for its part, would have to renounce some territory that is not under its control in any case, such as al-Hamma, as well as land currently under Israeli sovereignty, such as Dardara. This concession would make it possible to sign an agreement with the Syrians, which would give Israel full control of areas west of the present demarcation line that it does not control in practice today.

Pinhas Lavon asked what was Syria's interest in reaching a settlement. Dayan replied that for years the Syrians had been seeking access to the water line for reasons of national pride. Sharett added that it was important for the Syrians to demonstrate that they had managed to recover some of the land they had been forced to evacuate under the armistice agreement.

Dayan elaborated several points concerning the three sectors of the demilitarized zone. They had not yet discussed the northern sector, where the lands were owned by Syrians, and Israel preferred not to reach an accord on this sector. Negotiations on the central sector had been completed. The lands on which the water diversion project will be constructed are Arab-owned. Hence Israel wished to be awarded this sector in a parti-

tion agreement. It had been formally decided that the demarcation line in the central sector would be the eastern bank of the Jordan and the Hula. Negotiations over the southern sector had only just begun. Israel's policy was not to evacuate Haon or Tel Qazir and not to renounce Israeli sovereignty over the ten-meter strip surrounding the Sea of Galilee. Israel was prepared to grant individual Syrians fishing and cattle-watering rights in the Sea of Galilee. The guiding principle in this sector is to satisfy Syrian interests without modifying the border. Israel might have to return some territory, such as the al-Hamma strip.

The Government listened to the report and explanations about the Israeli negotiations with Syria but did not discuss them or take any decisions.

39. Ch. Yahil and F. E. Shinnar (Cologne) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 26 January 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2354/1

Yahil and Shinnar report to Sharett on Goldmann's talk with Adenauer. Adenauer promised that he will instruct the Bonn government to discuss approval of the reparations agreement on 3 February and submit the matter to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Bundesrat on 6 February. This schedule will ensure a debate and vote in the Bundesrat plenum on 20 February and final ratification by the Bundestag in the second half of March. Adenauer evinced understanding and apologized for past delays. The Israelis gained the impression that Adenauer wants to keep his promises. The Germans have retreated from their previous intentions to await preliminary results of the negotiations by the German delegation that has left for Egypt.

On the subject of fuel, Adenauer agreed to personally ask a competent official in the Bank of the German Länder to authorize DM 60 million in credit.

In light of these developments, Yahil and Shinnar propose holding off dispatch of the note to Adenauer.[1] In the interim, Goldmann should remain in Berlin and not return to Israel. Yahil met with a deputy chairman of the Social Democratic Party, who promised that the party will continue its active support for ratification of the agreement and strongly denied that there has been any change in their attitude.

Yahil and Shinnar request that the issue not be given too much publicity in Israel and that further action be delayed for another day or two, in order not to cause the German side to overreact.

Notes

1. See No. 37.
2. See No. 58. For more details on Israeli activity at this time, see the letters from Shinnar and Yahil to Eytan, 30 January 1953, 130.02/2417/7).

40. United States Division (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 27 January 1953

Coded Tel. IWA7; Inc.: 130.09/2309/12

The following points were raised in Davis's talk with Sharett on 26 January: (1) The State Department is concerned that Israel will not honor its commitment to release blocked Arab accounts. Sharett confirmed that Israel will release the one million sterling it has promised, but explained that before any further releases can be considered it will take into account Jewish funds in Arab countries and the Arab economic boycott, in all its manifestations. (2) When the discussion turned to the situation along the border with Jordan, Sharett provided details of Israeli losses in 1952.[2] He listed the following reasons for the deterioration of the situation: (a) reduced patrolling by the Arab Legion; (b) the absence of Jordanian government control over the National Guard, which takes a hand in the plunder and shares out the spoils; (c) the increasing influence of the Palestinians, who are not concerned by the turbulent situation on the border. Sharett added that the agreement to combat infiltration had not been abrogated by Israel but had simply lost all validity when the Jordanians failed to implement it.[3] He asked the State Department to impress upon the Jordanian government that this situation cannot continue. (3) Concerning the talks with the Syrians, Sharett reported confidentially that the Government had approved the idea of eliminating and partitioning the demilitarized zone while ensuring Israeli sovereignty over the water, and in certain areas also over a strip along the eastern bank. Fishing and irrigation rights dating back to the Mandate would be restored to the Syrians.[4] (4) As for the financial crisis, Davis said that his embassy is concerned by the opinions expressed in commercial circles and even by a government official to the effect that the U.S. government is responsible for the crisis because of delays in transferring grant funds. He made it plain that such an opinion is unfair and potentially harmful.

Notes

1. See Vol. 7, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, p. 314.

2. Davis apprised Sharett of the State Department's concern at the remarks by a member of Israel's Washington Embassy about Israel's disappointment with the response to its gesture—its announcement concerning the release of the blocked accounts of Arab refugees—and its reluctance to undertake further unilateral action. He wanted to know whether this implied second thoughts about the one million Israel pounds already promised. (See Sh. Bendor, "Report dated 28 January 1953 on the Foreign Minister's conversation with the U.S. ambassador in Israel," 93.08/357/43.)
3. Sharett reported 952 thefts, 124 attempted thefts, 34 acts of robbery, 13 murders, 50 killed in operations, and 51 wounded (see Sh. Bendor, ibid.).
4. See No. 34 and n. 1 there.
5. In the report on the talk that Davis sent to the State Department, he noted his impression that those advocating an iron-fist policy against the Jordanians were gaining ground. There was a danger of retaliatory actions whose outcomes were likely to be dangerous (see report on the talk in *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1106–1107). See also No. 46.
6. Cf. No. 34, n. 3.
7. A reference to Israel's financial crisis in 1952, when it was unable to meet its short-term obligations. See Vol. 7, No. 315, and No. 122 below.
8. See No. 75.

41. Ch. Herzog (Washington) to the United States Division. 28 January 1953

Coded Tel. WIA863; Outg.: 93.01/2209/2

Herzog reports that on the previous day Goitein met, at his own request, with Byroade; Herzog and Waller were also present. Goitein mentioned Byroade's trip to London and asked for clarification about plans for the Middle East. Byroade reiterated what he had told Eilat.[1] He vented his displeasure at the Israeli campaign in the press against aid to Egypt; it was unfortunate, he said, that he could not personally explain the facts to the Israelis and American Jews. He stressed that the survival of Naguib's regime was seen as a vital regional interest and the best way to achieve peace. In his present fragile situation—which Byroade believes is demonstrated by recent events in Egypt—Naguib cannot take any action towards peace. The United States, he said, is the only Western country with any credibility in Egypt; to buttress this credibility, and give Naguib's supporters in the military a reason to justify his faith in the U.S., Washington must provide Egypt with a small quantity of arms. The bureaucratic process leading up to the transfer of the arms will take a number of months.

Byroade said that the United States is pressuring Britain to wind up the Sudanese and Canal affairs. There is already a secret written commitment by Naguib that he is interested in regional defense. Goitein asked whether Israel was included in the general agreement. Byroade replied that he pre-

ferred not to reply, lest the information leak out and torpedo his plans. He noted that it would not be a good idea to grant weapons to Israel at the same time as to Egypt, since this would detract from the value of the deal in Egypt's eyes. He views arms supplies to other countries in the region as a matter for a later stage. The British, like the Israelis, are exerting pressure against arms to Egypt, arguing that deliveries should be made conditional on an early accord on bases in the Canal Zone. Byroade opposes this position. During the long debate that ensued he revealed that he has absolutely made up his mind on this point and cannot be persuaded to change it. He declared that if Naguib falls Israel will be no less sorry than the United States.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 18 and its summary in telegram 992, sent to Washington on 18 January 1953, 130.09/2309/12.
2. See Herzog's detailed report on the meeting in a document dated 4 February 1953, 130.02/2403/18.

42. Latin America Division and United States Division (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 28 January 1953

Coded Tel.: MTA86; Outg.: 130.09/2377/1

(1) In a talk with Tsur on 26 January, Remorino, the Argentinian foreign minister, said that he had suggested to Perón that they approach Israel about instructing its Embassy in Washington to help them make connections with politicians and especially journalists in the United States. (2) On 27 January, Perón had expressed sympathy to a Jewish delegation concerning the Soviet libel and added that the most important task today is to save the Jews behind the Iron Curtain and to strengthen Israel so it can withstand this wave of antisemitism. (3) In view of the above it was decided: (a) to publicize Perón's statement in the Israeli press; (b) to encourage articles in a number of Israeli papers; (c) to ask the Associated Press to transmit the Israeli reactions to the United States and Argentina. (4) Remorino's request and Perón's words constitute a basis for efforts on behalf of Argentina in the United States, as follows: (a) Israel should see to it that American Jewish organizations respond favorably to Perón's statement when it appears in the American press. (b) Israel should encourage a positive reaction in the Jewish and, if possible, the general press. (c) The head of an American Jewish organization should visit the Argentinian em-

bassy to express his gratitude for the statement. (d) Goitein should inform the State Department confidentially of Remorino's approach to Tsur.

Notes

1. For a report on the meeting, see Tsur's telegram to Eytan, 26 January 1953, 130.09/2294/4.
2. On 27 January, Perón met with a delegation of representatives of the Argentinian Jewish community. For more details on the meeting, see Arazi to Latin American Division, 30 January 1953, 130.12/2578/22.
3. Israel Embassy staff in Washington and members of the mission in New York had reservations about Tsur's recommendation to work on Perón's behalf in the United States. They argued that a previous Embassy attempt in this vein had failed, since Jewish and liberal public opinion in the United States was strongly opposed to the Perón regime; any new attempt was only likely to harm the Embassy's political activities. The Embassy staff also argued that open and sympathetic support for Perón might impair Israel's friendship with other Latin American countries that do not support Perón's regime. (For a thorough analysis of the issue, see Herlitz to the United States Division, 5 February 1953, ibid.)

43. Sh. Eliashiv (Moscow) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 28 January 1953

Coded Tel. QIA388; Inc.: 130.09/2356/6

Eliashiv expresses his dismay at the publication in *Devar hashavu'a* of a photograph he fears could serve as a pretext for charges that the legation in Moscow maintains illicit contacts.[1] He criticized the declarations by Eban and Elath about the Doctors' Plot; they gave the impression of provocation and a desire to bring Israel's relations with the Soviet Union to a head. He regrets that the Foreign Ministry had not seen fit to consult with him on the tenor of Israeli statements and publications concerning the affair.[3]

Notes

1. The cover of *Devar hashavu'a (Davar*'s weekend magazine) for 22 January 1953 carried a picture of hundreds of Jews photographed outside Moscow's Great Synagogue during the spontaneous reception for Golda Meyerson when she was appointed Israel Minister to the Soviet Union in September 1948.
2. See No. 15, n. 3.
3. See No. 17.
4. In his reply, Sharett wrote Eliashiv that his apprehensions were exaggerated and that he apparently had not correctly assessed the intensity of the storm brewing in Israel

and the depth of the concern for the fate of Soviet Jewry. He added that the revelation of the Doctors' Plot and the tempest it aroused had triggered swift responses from Eban and Elath; similarly, he had been unable to consult with Eliashiv before his speech in the Knesset. On the other hand, he asked Eliashiv's opinion of the proposals to hold a world Jewish protest conference and to raise the issue at the second session of the Seventh General Assembly.

Eliashiv rejected Sharett's explanation and repeated his assertion that publication of the photograph opened the way for the claim that Israel was involved in espionage and endangered the lives of the people who appeared in the photo. He believed that publication of the picture was more a sop to sensationalism than evidence of deep concern for the fate of Soviet Jewry. Eliashiv explained that he did not mean to condemn Sharett's Knesset speech; in his opinion, however, Israel's ambassadors should restrain their emotions and not allow themselves to be dragged after the public mood. He warned against accelerating the deterioration in relations with the Soviet Union unless this were a deliberate and level-headed decision. "If Israel has something to say to the Soviet Union," he wrote, "it should do so directly, and not by means of spontaneous declarations in various corners of the world." He added that the fate of Soviet Jewry was no less dear to him than to others, and that if he had lost his grasp of world affairs he wanted to be replaced by someone with different assessments. (See the exchange of telegrams between Sharett and Eliashiv, IGA295, 30 January 1953, 130.09/2325/5; 2 February 1953, 130.09/2325/6.)

44. W. Eytan (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 29 January 1953

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.16/2953/10

At a meeting with Israel's representatives, Taxis[2] told them as follows: (1) The Syrians demand that the northern sector of the demilitarized zone be partitioned and that the armistice line there be redrawn. (2) In the central sector of the demilitarized zone they agree that the demarcation line pass along the eastern shore of the Hula, leaving any land reclaimed from the lake in Israeli hands. (3) There is no change in the previous agreement that the line should run along the eastern bank of the Jordan. (4) In the southern sector of the demilitarized zone the Syrians insist that the line be N-S map coordinate 208, which passes through the Sea of Galilee to Nuqeib; the line would then go east to cut between Nuqeib and Ein Gev, leaving Susita in Israeli hands, and continue south parallel to the shore to the latitude of Samra before veering southeast in a straight line to the Yarmuk, leaving Tel Qazir in Israeli hands. The change from the previous proposal is that the Syrians would have access to the Sea of Galilee only north of Ein Gev.

Israel's reaction was as follows: (1) Partition of the northern demilitarized zone must be according to the current situation on the ground, leaving one-third in Israel's hands. Israel is not prepared to discuss any border

changes outside the demilitarized zone. (2) In the southern region, Israel is prepared to concede al-Hamma, Tawafiq, a narrow strip along the rocky terrain of the international border, and Nuqeib.

The next meeting was fixed for 2 February.[3]

Notes

1. The telegram was also sent to Israel's missions in London, Paris, and Rome.
2. Compare the last paragraph of No. 30. The meeting took place in Tiberias on 26 January. For further details, see Gaon's report to the General Staff, 28 January 1953, 130.02/2434/3.
3. See No. 53.

45. Sh. Bendor [Tel Aviv] to M. Sharett. 29 January 1953

Copy: 130.02/2415/1

Bendor reports on a talk with Fried, held at the latter's initiative. Fried spoke of Israeli military operations across the Jordanian border and cautiously suggested that there may not always be coordination between Government policy and military operations in the field. Bendor explained that there is a consensus between the Government and army as to the means to be adopted against infiltration. He was not prepared to promise that there would be no reprisal operations in the future and pointed out that only where there has been a forceful Israeli reaction has there been a lull in infiltration. In his opinion, the remedy lies with the Jordanians. If the Jordanian government cooperated with Israel to prevent infiltration there would be no need for vigorous action by Israel.

From the phrase "active defense," which appeared in Gaon's announcement, and from the general tenor of that announcement Fried had concluded that Israel had decided to adopt a new and more active strategy.[2] Bendor stressed that infiltration is on the increase; since Jordan is not cooperating to prevent it, Israel must rely on itself. He admitted that this could lead to strong action by Israel.

Notes

1. See No. 40.
2. See No. 34, n. 1; cf. No. 40, n. 5.

46. D. Goitein (Washington) to the United States Division. 30 January 1953

Coded Tel.: WIA873; Outg.: 93.01/2209/2

Jernegan called in Goitein and expressed the U.S. government's concern at the IDF operation in the villages of Falama and Rantis.[1] Goitein replied that he had not yet received information about the operation but was aware of the unrest along the border. He stressed that the Arabs' lack of willingness for peace, as manifested at the last session of the General Assembly, necessarily leads to unrest. Jernegan answered that just as the Americans are showing restraint in Korea, Israel must show restraint along its borders. He said that whether or not Israel is in the right, the Arabs are like children and it is Israel that must act with maturity.

Goitein reported that Jernegan had also met with the Jordanian minister.[3] He does not believe that Jernegan's expression of concern should be construed as a protest.

Notes

1. On the night between 22 and 23 January, an IDF detachment attacked the village of Falama; in the exchange of fire, one IDF soldier was killed. On the night between 28 and 29 January, IDF forces attacked the villages of Falama, Rantis, and Kafr Jammal, in the Triangle. In the latter operation, two people were killed, including the mukhtar of Falama, several were injured, and four houses were blown up.
2. See No. 40, n. 3.
3. Yusuf Haykal, Jordanian minister in the United States. Compare the report on the two meetings in *FRUS,* 1952-1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, p. 1110.

47. Sh. Divon (Paris) to R. Shiloah. 1 February 1953

Orig.: 130.15/3735/6

Divon reports on his talk with Abd al-Rahman Sadiq,[1] who had returned from Egypt with a message for Divon from members of the Revolutionary Command Council: (1) Sadiq is authorized to conduct talks with Divon. (2) The Council wishes to clarify how Israel defines the concept "aggressive policy." (3) Outwardly, Egypt will preserve the status quo in its relations with Israel on the political, military, and economic fronts, taking Egypt's domestic and external situation into account. For example, it cannot deviate from the Arab position on Israel at the UN. (4) Egypt will maintain its official stand on German reparations; but if Egypt and Israel attain the ini-

tial stages of an understanding and cooperation it will not interfere with implementation of the agreement. (5) Should problems arise between the two countries, Israel can approach the Council via Sadiq. (6) How can Israel assist Egypt in the economic and political fields? Can it help with the press and public opinion on the issue of British evacuation of the Canal Zone? (7) The Council desires that all contacts remain confidential.

Sadiq commented on the Council's message: (a) The Egyptian decision to establish official contacts with Israel was taken after protracted discussions and represented a compromise between differing opinions. (b) The question that concerns Nasser is to what extent Israel sincerely wishes to cooperate with and assist Egypt and the Arab countries. If Egypt sees that Israel can help, using its economic and political influence in the United States, the attitude that cooperation with Israel is in Egypt's interest will prevail over the difficulties inherent in a policy of rapprochement. (c) British evacuation of the Suez Canal is Egypt's major concern at present; any assistance in this matter is of the utmost importance. Military circles are opposed to linking the evacuation with the Middle East Command. (d) An Israeli request to lift the Arab boycott would be impracticable. Summing up, Sadiq explained that if Israel is not willing to take a risk and make a gesture to convince cynics in Egypt of its sincerity in the contacts, its reply to the Council will probably lead to a cooling of relations.

Divon requests Shiloah's reaction to his letter.[2]

Notes

1. Press attaché at the Egyptian Embassy in Paris. For Divon's earlier contacts, see Vol. 7, Nos. 403 and 443.
2. In a telegram to Shiloah (6 February), Divon wrote that "Sadiq is very eager to receive an early reply and reiterates that in the situation that has been created he views our willingness to offer economic assistance through purchases and marshalling our influence in the United States as the only chance for embarking on the path of cooperation." He added that if Israel's answer "allows for discussion, he intends to propose that Divon travel to Egypt to establish personal contact with the Command" (130.15/3744/1). For Israel's reply, see No. 70.

48. Ch. Herzog (Washington) to A. Eban (Washington). 2 February 1953

Copy: 130.20/2475/9

Herzog is convinced that Israel's activity in Washington to cancel the arms shipments to Egypt is doomed to failure and will cause no more than a

postponement of the plan. The State Department believes that Naguib's regime is crucial for the West; in consequence, Israel's arguments against weapons deliveries to Egypt do not meet with understanding. In the American scale of priorities, a settlement between Israel and Egypt takes third place, after an Anglo-Egyptian accord and Egyptian participation in the Middle East defense organization. In Herzog's opinion, Israel must accept the likelihood that Egypt will be receiving weapons in the next few months. He proposes launching a new public campaign in favor of military assistance to Israel, while submitting concurrently an initial list of arms it wishes to purchase. Herzog thinks that the United States will provide no more than $10 million in weapons to Egypt, out of the $100 million requested. In this context he proposes using every propaganda means to make Egypt realize that it was Israel's efforts in the United States that caused a considerable reduction in the quantity and quality of armaments they were to receive as well as the refusal to supply jet aircraft to Egypt.

Notes

1. See No. 4.
2. See No. 41.
3. See No. 75.

49. Meeting of the Senior Staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Tel Aviv, 2 February 1953)

Protocol: 130.02/2458/7

The meeting of senior staff was attended by Sharett, Eytan, Kohn, Rosenne, Comay, Levavi, Shiloah, Bendor, Najar, Kidron, Katz, and Tekoah.

Sharett reported on his conversation about Syria with the Prime Minister and IDF commanders. He began by mentioning his exchange of notes with Ben-Gurion,[1] who ultimately rejected his idea of ceding small tracts in the demilitarized zone in return for a possible agreement to partition the zone. In the event, the negotiations subsequently followed Sharett's strategy and the army did accept his premise. The IDF guidelines in the current talks are that Israel must guarantee that the water remain within its territory and it have the right to use it freely, and that existing settlements be preserved, except for Dardara. Israel must also maintain vital positions, but would agree to renounce certain areas, such as al-Hamma, which in any case it is finding difficult to control.

If the negotiations proceed as the army hopes, the demilitarized zone will be partitioned, two-thirds to Israel and one-third to Syria. Sharett listed the

advantages of such an agreement: (1) creation of a permanent and clearly defined situation in the demilitarized zone and the elimination of the main cause of trouble in the area; (2) effective control of most of the territory, over some of which Israeli might lose control if no agreement is reached; (3) the opportunity to act with a free hand in water matters; (4) the importance of reaching an agreement with Syria at a time of tense relations between Israel and its neighbors. Sharett added that one of the limitations of the agreement is recognition of the prior individual rights of Syrian farmers and fishermen.

Eytan expressed concern that the border determined in these talks would be the minimum border and that, in any eventual peace negotiations, Israel would be unable to advance beyond it and might even have to withdraw further. He suggested weighing whether Israel's strategy of coming to the talks without raising claims and of discussing subjects only after hearing the Syrian demands is an appropriate way to conduct negotiations. Eytan also asked what the Syrians expect to achieve from the talks, if they are to receive only minor concessions from Israel, as Sharett presented it. Eytan argued that there has been no information campaign, either at home or abroad; he suspects that domestic public opinion is not ready for concessions. The public would see only Israel's territorial concessions; it would be difficult to explain the considerations that had guided the talks, especially since not everything could be made public. Eytan noted that the draft agreement should take account of the landowners, who have thus far refused to sell their land, as a result of Syrian pressure. On the other hand, it is doubtful whether Israeli law would apply to these lands. He proposed starting work on a draft agreement.

Shiloah said that he did not view this agreement as a precedent, because the demilitarized zone distinguishes the Syrian frontier from all the others. Moreover, Israel has always proclaimed its readiness for mutual concessions, so no dangerous precedent is involved. During the armistice talks, Israel had known that when peace negotiations began it would not be easy to hold onto the land evacuated by the Syrians and that they would assert territorial claims, beyond their historical rights. Israel is attempting to gain control of the demilitarized zone but has not managed to establish enough facts on the ground. Even should an agreed frontier be drawn, this would not entail further concessions in the future. Shiloah proposed that the issue of lands and inhabitants in the zone that would remain in Israeli hands not be raised in the negotiations; this would make it clear that all laws applying to other regions and other armistice lines will apply here too.

In answer to Eytan's question, Sharett offered two reasons why Shishakli might favor an agreement: (1) fear of getting embroiled with Israel as a result of his policy of continual provocations in the demilitarized zone to prevent its control by Israel; (2) the opportunity to present the agreement to the Syrian public as a great achievement, given that the Syrian public is

not conversant with the precise geographical situation and would not fully understand the extent of the concessions.

Kohn pointed out the positive aspects of such talks, after four years of an armistice regime, but also noted the negative aspect of the precedent that the Syrians could obtain something from Israel as a result of disturbances and harassment.

Tekoah commented that the ideal solution would be a concise agreement including the following main points: (1) confirmation of the intention to settle disputes peacefully; (2) partition of the demilitarized zone. Tekoah added that the Egyptians are showing an interest in the agreement with the Syrians and have announced that they too are thinking along the same lines with regard to the demilitarized zone at 'Auja.

Rosenne said that an agreement with Syria would constitute a change in the armistice agreements and would influence the situation along the other borders. He thought it unwise to deal with the Syrians separately and did not share his colleagues' optimism. In his opinion, the only way to conclude the matter without difficulty would be for Israel to agree to the Syrians' long-standing demand for access to the water. He does not see how the Syrians can agree to anything less; the question is whether Israel can concede this point.

Kidron held that a concession to the Syrians in the demilitarized zone would indeed make things easier for the army and perhaps also facilitate Israel's own water projects; but from a political point of view Israel would lose one of its strongest cards in the region and merely whet the appetite of others, encouraging them to make similar demands. In his opinion, this is an appropriate stage for breaking off the negotiations. This would make their objective even more precious to the Syrians, so that in eventual peace talks Israel would have something to concede. Kidron feared that Shishakli will not be satisfied with what he gets now and the Syrians will keep on harassing Israel. Israel would lose more by the talks than it gained.

Sharett was opposed to breaking off the talks; Israel must never be the party that suspends negotiations. The talks should be continued until the other side is worn down.

Katz supported negotiations with Syria, but he too feared that Shishakli may want more. He proposed that Israel stand firm on denying the Syrians access to the water line, since such access would be fraught with dangers for Israel.

Bendor complained that the negotiations are proceeding without significant Foreign Ministry participation.

Sharett replied that he regretted the absence of IDF representatives at the meeting, but this does not mean that there have not been consultations with the Foreign Ministry, which was a partner to the decision to begin negotiations. Nevertheless, there is room for further consultations between the two. Sharett made it clear that the army also entertains nonmilitary

considerations and is aware of the water issue and the political situation in the region. The IDF is the sole effective agent in the region. Answering Rosenne, Sharett explained that the talks are not being conducted in a vacuum. They are the result of the problematic situation in the demilitarized zone and of the international situation. Shishakli is gaining sympathy in the United States and Israel cannot reject his proposal for a meeting. As for Rosenne's contention that Israel is isolating the problem of Syria from its other issues with the Arab countries, Sharett pointed out that Israel has held countless talks with Jordan; there is no reason not to solve specific issues with the Syrians. Sharett reiterated that Israel must not break off the negotiations and stressed that another meeting between Foreign Ministry staff and army representatives is essential.

Eytan doubted the utility of consultations with the army, since the opinions of individual Foreign Ministry staff members would not bear any weight with the military; only instructions from on high are likely to be effective. Sharett did not agree with Eytan and argued that there is a reason for discussing the decisive question with the army: namely, should Israel continue to oppose the Syrian demand for a border running along the waterline and accept the risk of no agreement and continued anarchy in the demilitarized zone, to the point that Israel would in practice be forced to relinquish control of the area? Or should it make concessions, reach an agreement, and attempt to reinforce important positions within the framework of the agreement?

Notes

1. See Vol. 7, Nos. 408 and 413; and cf. No. 34 above.
2. See Nos. 23 and 30.
3. The quotation is missing in the original.
4. The original erroneously reads "today."
5. See Vol. 7, No. 402.
6. For an analysis of the conference of Arab delegations to the armistice commissions, held in Amman in November 1952, see the document Gaon sent to the Foreign Ministry on 18 January 1953 (130.02/2428/4).
7. Article V of the armistice agreement with Syria deals with procedures in the demilitarized zone and the authority of the chairman of the Mixed Armistice Commission. See Vol. 3, Appendix J.
8. See No. 53.

50. Meeting of the Senior Staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Tel Aviv, 2 February 1953)

Draft of Protocol: 130.02/2458/7

Participants:[1] Sharett, Eytan, Shiloah, Comay, Levavi, Rosenne, Bendor,

Najar, and Katz. Topic: policy concerning the Jordanian frontier.[2]

Sharett explained that the policy of reprisals does not spring merely from a desire for revenge but rather from considerations of the General Staff: (1) When intelligence reports indicate that certain villages are serving as jumping-off points for attacks, Israel retaliates by attacking one village in order to deter the others. (2) Retaliation spurs the Jordanian government to take action. (3) Retaliation lifts the morale of the residents of border settlements and encourages them to stay put. (4) Retaliation raises the morale of the army, which cannot sit idly by and watch the Jordanians make a mockery of the country. Those who favor reprisals do not assert that they constitute a solution to the problem, but only that there is a need to react when matters reach such a pitch that the frontier and the settlements along it are wide open to attack. Sharett rejected Eytan's proposal that the issue of the IDF's defense of border settlements be placed before the Government; he expressed support for the army's judgment. As for coordination between the IDF and the Foreign Ministry, Sharett made it clear that this issue should not be blown out of proportion; the army must be allowed freedom of action. One could ask, however, that the Foreign Ministry be informed immediately of any action and that no statements be released for publication without prior consultation with it.

Comay stressed the importance of coordination between the Foreign Ministry and the army. The IDF decision to undertake military action across the border was tantamount to violating the armistice agreement; as such it was a serious matter and required consultations with the Foreign Ministry. The Foreign Ministry had found itself in an embarrassing situation; the impression had been created that the army has one policy and the Foreign Ministry another. The Ministry does not know what fabrications it will have to disseminate or what facts it will have to justify or deny. A situation in which an IDF regular force crosses the frontier is unhealthy and dangerous. Comay proposed that the Government establish a joint committee, comprising two members of the General Staff and two Foreign Ministry officials, which would attempt to achieve understanding and coordination between these two bodies and defer to higher echelons when it comes to taking a decision.

Eytan said that the lack of coordination does not surprise him; it is characteristic of various national institutions. He demurred at the IDF operation and did not accept the army's argument that force is the only language the Arabs understand. Retaliation does not alleviate the situation and is generally soon followed by new infiltration attempts. At the same time, Eytan understands that the army must react and cannot just stand by and do nothing; the problem is the absence of systematic planning and thought. From his tour of the frontier he gained the impressions that people do not stand watch over their property because they know they will be reimbursed; hence whatever guarding is done is ineffective. He suggests consult-

ing all agencies responsible for security about the possibility of improving defense arrangements. Perhaps greater security would obviate the need for vigorous military action.

Shiloah said that strong and well-planned action does put a temporary halt to attacks, infiltration, and thefts and forces the other side to patrol the frontier. He was pessimistic about the future of relations with Jordan. The Jordanian prime minister has no public backing, the royal family lacks authority, and the British ambassador has lost his influence. On the other hand, the influence of the Palestinian Arabs has increased. Shiloah suggested forcing the Jordanian regime to understand that it will not survive unless it asserts control of the frontier. Israel should also get the Arab Legion to assume responsibility for the border, make use of foreign channels to influence Jordan, and continue its vigorous policy along the frontier without making declarations.

Katz opposed reprisals, since he believes they do not act as deterrents. There is too much emotion in the army and too little forethought.

Levavi said that he does not disqualify any kind of defensive action against infiltration. Situations might arise in which cross-border operations were necessary to curb infiltration. Ways could be found to disguise this activity; it is not necessary to announce that it was carried out by the IDF. It cannot be asserted that such actions have no effect. He assumes that the decision to cross the frontier was taken by the Government, but such decisions ought to be taken in consultation with the Foreign Ministry. He thinks that an information campaign on the infiltration issue is essential.

Rosenne expressed doubt whether, from a certain perspective, the Foreign Ministry is empowered to decide as to the need for reprisals. Analysis of specific circumstances and deciding on the appropriate reaction to a given situation on the frontier is the province of the army. Explaining it to the outside world is the task of the Foreign Ministry.

Bendor questioned whether the operation had achieved its goals. If no further raids are in store a propaganda campaign is called for. Najar supported the operation, which he believed had strengthened Israel and its political standing. The political repercussions have not harmed Israel; it is not even sure that the operation caused any political or propaganda damage.

Notes

1. The remarks of the participants in the meeting are arranged in the file on separate pages without consecutive numbering. Each page bears the title and the names of the participants. Here they are presented in the order they are found in the file, although, to judge by their contents, it would appear that Sharett spoke at the end rather than the beginning of the meeting. The title and names of the participants are printed here only at the beginning of the document.

2. The discussion was held following the IDF reprisals against the villages of Rantis, Falama, and Kafr Jammal (see No. 46, n. 1).
3. See Comay's statement below.
4. See No. 34 and nn. 1 and 2 there.

51. M. Sharett to the Israel Embassy in Washington (telegram). 2 February 1953

Notes

1. 31 January.
2. See No. 46.
3. See No. 46, n. 1.
4. See No. 40 and n. 5 there.
5. On the night between 23 and 24 January, Israeli forces entered the Gaza Strip and blew up two houses in Deir el-Balah. Five local residents were killed.
6. In the celebrations held on 23 January to mark six months since the revolution, Naguib told mayors of the towns in the Gaza District that after he solved the problems of Suez and the Sudan he would work to liberate Palestine and return it to its people.

52. M. Sharett (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 2 February 1953

Coded Tel.: IWA20; Outg.: 130.09/2309/12

Sharett offers an analysis of the Doctors' Plot in the Soviet Union and explains why it is imperative to convene a conference of world Jewry to react to the allegations: (1) The malice revealed by the allegation is not a major component of political strategy *per se* but rather the outcome of a general trend to eliminate unreliable elements on a mass scale. (2) Even if the malicious component is of only secondary importance for Moscow, for Israel it is paramount. (3) Soviet policy is the result of a considered decision; Israel must be prepared for further manifestations of this kind and for a protracted campaign. (4) The means at Israel's disposal are extremely restricted. Hence one should not belittle the constant agitation of international public opinion, on the assumption that Moscow cannot remain indifferent to this. (5) One cannot rely on the facts alone to maintain the level of public tension; it has to be encouraged and stimulated.

Sharett added that the Government supports convening a conference with the following objectives: (1) condemning and refuting the accusation; (2) consolidating Jewish public opinion; (3) appealing to world public opin-

ion; (4) proclaiming, "Let my people go." The conference should stay within the bounds of demanding rectification of the offense to the Jewish people and express its concern for the welfare of world Jewry. It should not condemn Communism as a system or join the diplomatic campaign against the Soviet Union. The conference would be meaningful only if a substantial proportion of U.S. Jewry is represented. Sharett requests that the Embassy become involved in these efforts.

Notes

1. At the Government meeting of 1 February 1953, Sharett presented his arguments in favor of a conference of world Jewry and requested Government approval. Interior Minister Israel Rokach proposed that the Government not take a decision or adopt an initiative on the issue, but merely take note of the Foreign Minister's announcement. Sharett agreed, adding that this would allow it to be understood that the Government's position was favorable. On 15 February, the Government decided to recommend to the Knesset presidium that it send a parliamentary delegation to the conference. It was agreed that the Government would inform members of the coalition factions that they should not interpret the recommendation as a refusal by the Government to take part in the conference.
2. On 17 February, the Jewish Agency Executive in Jerusalem invited Jewish organizations to attend a conference to be held in Zurich on 10–12 March 1953, under the slogan, "Let My People Go." After Stalin's death on 5 March, however, it was decided to postpone and in effect to cancel the conference.

53. Report on the Meeting between the Delegations of Israel and Syria (Rosh Pinna, 2 February 1953, 11:00 A.M.)[1]

130.02/2434/3

The meeting was attended by Taxis, Vigier, Jadid, Shatīlah, Dayan, Gaon, Reichman, and Moda'i.

At Taxis's suggestion, Vigier chaired the meeting. He reported that Col. Taxis had informed him of both parties' views and of the boundary he proposed on the basis of his conversations with them.[3] The proposed line might be tenable, but premature disclosure to either side would be disastrous. Vigier believes that additional work and further discussions with the parties are required before he can show them the proposed boundary. The main question is whether the discussion involves the line in the demilitarized zone only or a new armistice line outside it as well. He understands that Israel has determined its stand on the issue; is this final, or is Israel prepared to modify its position?

Gaon explained that Israel had made clear from the very start of these

meetings that their objective is to modify the status of the demilitarized zones and the armistice line passing through them; changes in the general armistice can be discussed at peace talks. Israel's representatives are here to discuss the line in the demilitarized zone so as to prevent friction and incidents in the future, because both sides find the situation in the zone awkward.

Vigier said that there are two stages to the discussion: the first involves discussion of the boundary inside the demilitarized zone; the second involves the entire armistice line. Since they are currently in the first stage, he asks Syria to agree to Israel's position that the demilitarized zones be partitioned.

Jadid said that at all previous sessions they had not discussed partitioning the demilitarized zone but rather modification of the entire armistice line, with the objective of preventing future incidents. Syria's position is that a new armistice line must provide a secure border for both parties. A line running through the demilitarized zone can only partially satisfy this need.

Vigier expressed his understanding of the Syrians' disappointment, but averred that the main difficulties arise from the very existence of the demilitarized zone. He is not aware of any difficulties or basic problems that have cropped up along the armistice line outside the zones. It would be a great achievement if the sides could agree on demarcation of the line through the demilitarized zone, which is the source of most of the friction between the two sides.

Jadid said that the incidents that had occurred had in fact taken place outside the demilitarized zone. All the incidents outside the zone involved clashes between military forces rather than local inhabitants, as was the case within the demilitarized zone, where tensions generally centered on cultivation of the land, the detention of an Arab, and so on. True, there was the Hula incident, but that had been provoked for political reasons when Israel attempted to forcibly gain control of the demilitarized zone. This is the first time he has heard that Israel's position is to discuss the demilitarized zone alone rather than the entire armistice line. Had the Syrians known this earlier their position would have been different. He has no intention of preventing an agreement between the two sides, but wishes merely to clarify his position.

Vigier asked whether the Syrians were prepared to state their position if only the issue of the demilitarized zone is to be discussed, or whether they prefer to consult their government first and only then inform Taxis of their position.

Jadid replied that he must first consult his government.

Vigier asked whether the Israeli representatives wished to make a statement.

Dayan expressed his astonishment at the Syrian statement that this is the first time that Israel has declared its intention to discuss the demilitarized

zone only. At the beginning of the talks the chairman stated that partition of the demilitarized zone would affect the entire situation and eliminate the current tension and friction. The Syrians themselves had proposed that the discussions deal with the entire demilitarized zone as a separate issue and the talks have been conducted in this manner. The only problem related to the area outside the zone that has been discussed to date is the issue of drawing the boundary ten meters inland from the Sea of Galilee.

The Syrians are free to alter their stand during the course of the discussion if they have received new instructions from their government, but it cannot be asserted that this is the first time that Israel has clearly stated its position concerning partition of the demilitarized zone.

Vigier said that to the best of his recollection it had been agreed at the first session[4] that the fourth item on the agenda proposed by the Syrians would be discussed. This referred to possible changes in the armistice line. Later, in the course of the discussions, it became evident that the Syrians want to discuss the entire armistice line, whereas Israel wishes to restrict the talks to the demilitarized zone only. This is why he asked both sides to clarify their positions today.

Jadid said that from the outset Syria's position has been that the talks must deal with changes along the entire line, not only in the demilitarized zone. Accordingly the discussion had been broken down by region and not limited to the demilitarized zone. He is aware that Israel opposes talks on modifications of the entire armistice line and is interested only in demarcation of a line passing through the demilitarized zone, but he had not known that this is its final and absolute position.

Vigier said that he did not think it worth pursuing the discussions and hoped that the Syrian government's decision would be positive.

Jadid agreed with Vigier's view that the demilitarized zone is the main source of friction. He asked the chairman to summarize the views of both sides and mark their proposals for a new line on the map so that he can return to his government with a concrete proposal.

By way of clarification, Dayan made it plain that Israel had never proposed a specific line. The principles for drawing the line, which must take account of the status quo in the area, have to be determined first. He has repeatedly stated in the past that he does not wish to draw a line that might serve as the starting point for haggling. Israel's representatives are prepared to state their principles for drawing the line. The line shown to Taxis is not a concrete proposal but simply reflects the current situation on the ground.

Vigier agreed that there is no room for bargaining. He confirmed that Dayan had shown Taxis how he thinks the line should be drawn, in accordance with the principles he had mentioned. Taxis intends to discuss the issue with the Syrians on the basis of this proposal.

Jadid stated that the new situation requires consultation with his government. He would like to meet with Taxis to understand the principles

on which Israel is willing to discuss partition of the demilitarized zone or demarcation of a new armistice line.

Dayan emphasized that Jadid should bear in mind two important principles when reporting to his government: (1) Israel is interested in a single line in the demilitarized zone. (2) The line should follow the status quo in the demilitarized zone. Israel's interest in partitioning the demilitarized zone is not aimed at gaining some advantage or altering the situation there.

Jadid asked what would happen to Dardara.

Dayan replied that although Dardara is not in territory controlled by Syria, he is willing to make an exception and bring the matter to his government, but only after a general agreement has been reached concerning the boundary.

Jadid reiterated that Syria's position remains unchanged: it is prepared for changes along the entire armistice line. The new situation obliges him to ask his government for instructions.

Vigier summarized the two possibilities: (1) If the Syrians insist that the entire line be discussed, the talks will be suspended. (2) If the Syrians are willing to discuss changes in the demilitarized zone only, Taxis will continue meeting with both parties, not in order to bargain, but rather in an attempt to draw a line that would satisfy both sides.

Jadid asked once again whether Israel's stand is final or admits room for modification.

Dayan replied that there is no room for change unless the Syrians are willing to enter peace talks.

Jadid said that his starting point has always been the assumption that their discussions are taking place in the context of the armistice agreement.

Vigier asked whether he should set a date for the next session before or after the two parties have seen Taxis's proposed line.

Jadid answered that he believes it important to meet before then.

Vigier said it would be preferable to disclose Taxis's proposed line only after the Syrians report their government's response.

Jadid proposed that the next meeting take place on 5 February. Dayan, who informed those present that Harkabi had been appointed to replace him, asked that the next meeting not take place before 9 February.[5] The session was adjourned at 3 P.M.[6]

Notes

1. The document is dated 3 February 1953.
2. The list of participants has been omitted here. Attending were Taxis and Vigier and their secretarial staff, Jadid, Shatīlah, Dayan, Gaon, Moda'i, and Reichman.
3. See Nos. 30 and 44.

4. Cf. No. 19; see also the memorandum from Sh. Arad to Sh. Bendor, 9 February 1953, 130.16/2953/10.
5. Due to the difficulties that arose during the talks, the next meeting did not take place until 10 March. See No. 124.
6. Gaon's report added the following details: "After the discussion, the Syrians were informed of roughly where Israel envisages the new armistice line in the demilitarized zones." The Syrians did not respond, but stated they were claiming Shamalne, west of the Jordan, as well as fishing rights and access to the Sea of Galilee for the Arabs of Samakh who were living in Tawafiq. They did not evince any interest in the lands of Khuri and al-Baqara. (See Gaon to Foreign Ministry, 3 February 1953, 130.02/2434/3.)

54. Editorial Note

Mining of the Railroad Tracks near Qalqiliya, 2 February 1953

At 10 P.M. on 2 February, a freight train on the Haifa-Lod line ran over a mine near Qalqiliya and several bursts of gunfire were directed against it. A number of the cars were derailed. The mining incident was preceded by diversionary gunfire against Kibbutz Nir Eliyyahu. After the explosion, the IDF opened fire on the village of Qalqiliya.

Israel viewed the incident with the utmost gravity. The Government discussed the border situation, presented a statement in the Knesset, and conveyed *notes verbales* to the governments of the United States, France, and Great Britain (see No. 59 [Editorial Note] and No. 62).

On 3 February, the Mixed Armistice Commission dispatched an inquiry committee to the spot. It determined that a quantity of explosives had been placed beneath the rails and found the footprints of two people leading back across the border. At an emergency session of the commission, Jordan was condemned for violating Article IV, Paragraph 3 of the armistice agreement.

55. W. Eytan (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 3 February 1953

Copy: 130.20/2489/12

The intensification of the Arab boycott against Israel has increased the need for planning and action to foil it. Until an interministerial bureau is established to deal with the boycott, such efforts are centered in the Research Division of the Foreign Ministry. Eytan asks all missions abroad to send this division any relevant information or proposals. He presents sev-

eral factors that must be taken into account in discussions and suggestions for diplomatic and economic action: (1) Egypt is the key to the situation. (2) The Arab propaganda campaign is designed to deter foreign companies from investing in Israel and highlights the attraction of the large Arab market. In fact, the value of Israeli imports is more than one-quarter that of all the Arab countries combined. (3) The Arabs' *modus operandi* is to start by pressuring firms from whom they expect less resistance and then to lever their achievements with them to persuade more well-established companies. (4) Any assessment of the results of Arab activities must take into account that the atmosphere of terror they have created for those who invest in Israel is no less perilous than the actual damage inflicted upon the Israeli economy.

Eytan proposes the following reactions: (1) Raising the issue of pressure on commercial firms at international forums. This step must be weighed cautiously, since giving publicity to the boycott may strengthen the Arabs more than any practical outcome that may redound to Israel's advantage. (2) Appealing through diplomatic channels to governments in whose territory pressure is being exerted on a specific company. Special emphasis must be placed on the danger that economic boycott, as employed by the Arabs, may become a political weapon. (3) Holding up negotiations on additional concessions to the Arab refugees, such as the release of deposits or compensation for property. (4) Urging companies that operate in Israel or are interested in doing so, especially shipping companies and airlines, to present a united front against Arab pressure. The point to be stressed is that Arab pressure tends to be short-lived, so that a firm stand would prove worthwhile in the long run, even if it entails short-term losses. (5) Widespread and vocal action by Jewish and non-Jewish organizations in the United States to prevent private investments in Arab countries, especially Egypt. (6) Investigating the possibility of harming the Arab economies by hindering their exports and denying them credit. Such possibilities are limited, because most Arab exports are raw materials, but they are worth trying. Perhaps some ways to impede Arab exports could be found with the help of Jewish businessmen. (7) Considering ways to react against companies that capitulate to Arab pressure.

Notes

1. The document has not been located. On 30 January, a meeting on this issue was held with the Foreign Minister. For the minutes of the meeting, see 130.02/2458/7.

2. *Sic.* Should read "export."

56. E. Sasson (Rome) to W. Eytan. 4 February 1953

Coded Tel.: 248MPR; Inc.: 130.15/3755/18

Sasson reports on his first official interview with Zoppi,[1] who was most cordial and apologized for not having received him previously. He related that de Gasperi[2] had informed him of his talk with Sasson and said that Pacciardi had been instructed to explain to Gen. Naguib the need for peace with Israel. This enabled Sasson to elaborate on the situation in the Middle East and emphasize that the interests of Italy and Israel are in no way contradictory in that region.

During the conversation Zoppi asked Sasson to take action to resolve all outstanding issues between Italy and Israel and to start a new era of opportunities and success.

Notes

1. Vittorio Zoppi, director-general of the Italian Foreign Ministry. For more details of the talk, see Sasson to Najar, 4 February 1953, 130.02/2381/18.
2. Sasson met with the Italian prime minister and foreign minister on 26 January 1953. See Sasson to Najar, 26 January 1953, 130.02/2381/18.
3. Randolfo Pacciardi, the Italian minister of defense, was visiting Egypt at the time.

57. E. Elath to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram). 4 February 1953

Notes

1. Elsewhere Elath recorded that the meeting took place on 3 February. Possibly the telegram was written on that date and not sent until the morrow. (See Elath to Comay, 11 February 1953, 130.02/2414/8.)
2. See No. 3 (Editorial Note).

58. F. E. Shinnar and Ch. Yahil (Cologne) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 4 February 1953

Coded Tel.: BKA12; Inc.: 130.09/2354/1

Shinnar reports on the Bonn government's decision to empower Adenauer to submit the reparations agreement for ratification by the Bundesrat,[1] including the statement of financial coverage by the German finance minis-

ter. Friendly parties in Germany estimate that the Bundesrat will approve the agreement on 20 February. Shinnar was requested to keep this information strictly confidential, refrain from any action that might incite opponents of the agreement, and prevent anything that might hinder the German delegation in Egypt. As a result of these developments, Shinnar estimates that the fuel credit will be approved by 12 February.

Notes

1. Cf. No. 39.
2. Israel Kosloff, fuel adviser to the Ministry of Finance and director of the Petroleum Department in the Ministry of Development.
3. Jacob Brin, economic counselor in the Israel Embassy in London.

59. Editorial Note

Government Discussion of the Situation along the Borders and the Government's Statement in the Knesset, 4 February 1953

The Government convened after the mining of the railroad tracks near Qalqiliya (see No. 54, Editorial Note). Prime Minister Ben-Gurion cut short his vacation to attend the meeting. He reported on a number of acts of murder, robbery, theft, and the like perpetrated along Israel's borders during the past year, including 59 murders, most of them along the Jordanian frontier. Among the causes for these incidents he noted the large numbers of refugees in Jordan and their proximity to the border, as well as the fact that the Arab Legion was not patrolling the border. He considered the mining incident to be the last straw. Such an act required planning; according to the information available to Israel, this operation had been planned by the Jordanian defense minister, a former Jerusalemite who was interested in heating up the border. Ben-Gurion argued that such acts would not cease until Israel took serious measures. He made it plain that "taking measures" did not mean an occasional retaliation, but entering and holding villages in Jordan. Ben-Gurion emphasized the risk inherent in such a policy, because of the Tripartite Declaration, but added that in any case Britain was not adhering to the declaration—witness its sale of planes to Syria. Nor had Britain attempted to prevent the deterioration of the situation along the border, despite its treaty with Jordan. It was hard to predict the American reaction, because the new president had not yet formulated a clear policy, but the Administration was apparently interested in the friendship of the Arabs. Despite the importance of these considerations, Ben-Gurion concluded that the situation must not be tolerated, be-

cause it created a total lack of security throughout the country and could lead to demoralization in the army. He proposed informing the UN representative and the American and British envoys that the Government of Israel would not tolerate such incidents. Should they continued, the Government would take every measure to defend the border with Jordan, including raids into areas from which the attacks originated.

Sharett, speaking after Ben-Gurion, said inter alia that the mining of the rails marked an escalation of hostilities. He agreed with Ben-Gurion that a daring and forceful act was necessary and supported his proposal. He endeavored to present the political complications liable to ensue in the wake of a military operation. He also reported on his meeting with the American ambassador (see No. 51).

Dov Joseph supported more forceful measures than those taken to date. But he also pointed out the complications that were likely to arise with the United States. It would be a mistake to declare in advance how Israel intended to react. It would be enough to state that Israel would respond forcefully to another such incident. He did not like the idea of occupying and holding territory on the Jordanian side, because the Powers, especially the United States, would certainly pressure Israel to withdraw and Israel would wind up the loser. He proposed seeking a response that would not entail withdrawal.

Peretz Bernstein agreed that a public statement should be made, but proposed that the Government decide on an operation and its nature only after a further incident.

Bechor Shitrit agreed that the perpetrators of these acts must be punished, but opposed making a prior announcement, as Ben-Gurion had proposed.

Pinhas Lavon said that he would support a declaration that did not specify a specific measure and felt that the Government did not have enough information to decide on a specific measure. The Israeli argument would be weakened if a link could be shown to exist between the attack on the train and the operation in Rantis and Falama (see No. 46, n. 1). Lavon examined the repercussions of the operation proposed by Ben-Gurion and raised a number of questions. (1) Did Ben-Gurion anticipate escalation, and was the army prepared for such a development? (2) Were there any assessments about the reaction of other Arab countries and whether they would intervene? Ben-Gurion replied that if a serious situation developed, all the Arab countries would stand together. (3) Could Israel withstand American pressure given its economic and financial condition? Lavon explained that the motion submitted for discussion by Ben-Gurion was unreasonable. If the Government was to bear responsibility, it must first hear the evaluations of the Foreign Minister and Defence Minister with regard to possible complications.

Ben-Zion Dinur assumed that the Arabs' objective was to reopen the

Palestine issue at the United Nations. Israel must announce that it views infiltration as part of the war against it. He stressed the necessity of educating public opinion and proposed explaining to the Israelis that infiltration is a military tactic and hence must be countered by military means.

Joseph Sapir argued that a Government statement referring to a specific type of operation would create a commitment to implement it. The question was whether it was worthwhile taking the risk of getting involved in an operation that could develop into something serious. He reiterated the questions cited by Lavon and asked further whether it was justifiable to punish innocent people for acts undertaken by their government. This was tantamount to guerrilla warfare and was not the practice in wars between states. He requested additional information on the background in Jordan so that at least some of the assumptions on which the decision would rest would be clear.

Levi Eshkol proposed intensifying patrols along the border, even though this would be expensive.

Moshe Shapira expressed concern at the impression that a major retaliatory action might provoke in the world. He feared serious complications. He proposed continuing the retaliatory policy adopted so far and cautioned against harming women and children. When Ben-Gurion asked how Shapira supposed that women and children could be spared, Shapira replied that it was possible to attack institutional structures rather than private houses where women and children lived. In principle, Shapira agreed that a reaction was required and favored a sharply worded statement, but opposed measures different from those adopted in the past.

Israel Rokach said that if the Prime Minister was asking the Government to take responsibility for specific actions, he must allow the ministers time for thought. He did not believe the time was ripe for entering Jordan. He proposed retaliating by attacking a Jordanian transport artery and seconded Eshkol's proposal to establish a border police force.

Pinhas Rosen sided with those who had expressed reservations but favored Ben-Gurion's proposal that a declaration be made to the UN representatives and the powers. He opposed a major military operation without additional prior consultation with the Government.

Replying, Sharett explained that the Arab countries were not eager to start a second round of hostilities in the near future. Their intention was to cause Israel economic havoc and military expenses and to embroil it with the Western powers, who would then impose impossible conditions of peace. They sought to undermine the country's morale, weaken its standing in the world, and prove that the establishment of the State of Israel had been a historical mistake. Sharett supported those who argued against getting involved in a major conflagration. The objective of any statement must be to generate maximum pressure by the Powers on Jordan and perhaps also to serve as a warning to Egypt. He expressed vigorous opposition

to bombing a village, but supported an intimidation operation—an artillery bombardment, for example, provided the shells fell in open fields. He warned that bombing a village was likely to set off a storm of international protests.

Summing up, Ben-Gurion said that he did not fear war, because the Arabs were not prepared and America would not support it. He disagreed with Lavon since, according to his logic, the State of Israel would either never have been established or its borders would have extended only from Rehovot to Afula.

Ben-Gurion was adamantly opposed to a Government decision to issue a statement while making any action conditional on a new cabinet deliberation. He proposed declaring that should such cross-border operations continue, Israel would retaliate forcefully. He also proposed making a statement in the Knesset and referring the debate to the Foreign Affairs and Defense committee.

After the meeting, Sharett, responding to the Herut Party's motion to discuss "the welfare of the state and the security of its citizens' lives," made the following statement to the Knesset on behalf of the Government:

> The Government is extremely aware of the security problem on the frontiers. The Government held an extraordinary session this morning. The meeting was called by the Prime Minister, who cut short his vacation to attend. It focused on the situation that has arisen in the wake of the events of recent weeks, especially the malicious attack on the train. The Government is adopting the necessary measures. The Government believes that the public interest and the matter at hand mandate referring the topic to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.

The Government motion was approved (*Divrei ha-Knesset*, Second Session of the Second Knesset, Vol. XIII, pp. 646–47).

The following day, 5 February, Sharett transmitted the Government's *note verbale* to the representatives of the Western powers in Israel. See No. 61 (Editorial Note) and No. 62.

60. E. Elath to M. Comay (telegram). 5 February 1953

Notes

1. See Editorial Note below.
2. See No. 46, n. 1, and No. 54 (Editorial Note).
3. Cf. Bowker's account of the meeting, 5 February 1953, PRO, FO371/104777. On Amman's positive response to the British announcement, see the telegram from Amman to the British Foreign Office, 7 February 1953, PRO, FO371/104778.

61. Editorial Note

Submission of a Note Verbale *to the Envoys of the United States, France, and Great Britain, 5 February 1953*

On 5 February, Sharett summoned the ambassadors of the United States and Great Britain and the French chargé d'affaires to submit the document that follows to each of them. Sharett explained that the decision to submit the note had been taken in the previous day's extraordinary cabinet session, chaired by Ben-Gurion (see No. 58 [Editorial Note]).

The U.S. ambassador took note of the statement but did not respond. (See the report on the meeting, 8 February 1953, 93.03/84/20; for the ambassador's analysis of the note, see *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1123–25.)

The British ambassador, on the other hand, asked what measures Israel intended to take. Sharett explained that Israel's interests lay in protecting its border, not in conquering territory. Evans used the opportunity to inform Sharett of his government's concern at recent developments and its opposition to the use of force. He read to him the statement that Bowker had handed to Elath (see No. 60).

Sharett replied that the incident at Falama (see No. 46, n. 1) occurred after an Israeli patrol encountered Jordanian infiltrators in Israeli territory and chased them back across the border to that village, from which they had been fired upon. He repeated that Israel would be the last to take aggressive measures. He asked the British to make the Jordanians understand their responsibility for the deteriorating situation. (See Comay's report on the meeting, 5 February 1953, 93.04/41/13; compare the report by the British ambassador in his telegram to the Foreign Office, 5 February 1953, PRO, FO371/104777. With regard to the British response to Israel, there were differences of opinion between the ambassador and senior officials in Whitehall. See the correspondence between them, PRO, FO371/104778.) See also No. 92.

62. *Note Verbale* from the Government of Israel to the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, and France.

63. Z. Shek (Prague) to the Eastern Europe Division. 5 February 1953

Coded Tel.: P47; Inc.: 130.09/2343/3

Shek reports on his talk with Šimovi ,[1] at the end of which the latter handed him a note from the Czechoslovak government.[2] Šimovi began by demanding to know why Israel had reacted to Czechoslovakia's request with an insulting note[3] replete with distortions, leading to the deterioration in relations. Shek replied that the government of Israel is duty-bound to correct misstatements and refute false allegations. It was not Israel that caused the deterioration in relations. Šimovi repeated all the charges against Kubovy,[4] noting that the latter had insulted Borek.[5] Instead of understanding that Czechoslovakia will not tolerate intervention in its internal affairs, Israel has launched a campaign of defamation at home and abroad. He singled out for condemnation the attack on the legation in Tel Aviv as a result of incitement of the masses, done with the knowledge of the Foreign Minister and members of the Government. Shek denied this, attempted to explain the mood prevailing in Israel, and placed the responsibility with the Czechs. He added that immigration from Poland continues. Šimovi replied that Czechoslovakia has taken no decision in principal barring emigration, but this is an internal Czechoslovak matter and not subject to pressure, intervention, or subversion by Israel. The talk took place in a cold but not hostile atmosphere.

The note delivered by Šimovi included the following: (1) Israel's letter of 18 December[6] was a willful distortion of the facts and insulting. (2) Czechoslovakia protests and rejects the note. (3) Ever since Avriel, Israeli diplomats have exceeded their prerogatives. (4) Examples of such actions are given, including during the tenure of Eliashiv, who is mentioned by name. (5) Most of the allegations concern Kubovy. (6) The letter repeats the allegation about the Morgenthau-Acheson plan and its implementation by Ben-Gurion and Sharett. (7) Czechoslovakia desires correct relations, but warns Israel that a continuation of its hostile policy would lead to a further deterioration in relations, for which Israel would bear the blame.[7]

Notes

1. Ladislav Šimovi , head of the Near East and Asia Section of the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry.
2. See the telegram from the legation in Prague to the Foreign Ministry, 6 February 1953, 130.09/2343/3.
3. The note was sent on 18 December 1952. See Vol. 7, No. 493, and n. 3 there.

4. Ibid., No. 484.
5. Vlastimil Borek, joint deputy foreign minister of Czechoslovakia.
6. The reference is to the allegation made at the Prague Trial concerning a secret American-Zionist plan, agreed upon in 1947, whereby the United States would support the establishment of Israel; in return, the Zionists would organize espionage and subversion cells throughout the Soviet bloc. See Vol. 7, No. 460.
7. The full text of the Czechoslovak letter is in file 130.09/2343/3.

64. Meeting: Ch. Herzog–A. H. Ghālib (Washington). 6 February 1953

Report: 130.13/2593/22

Herzog met Ghālib, the Egyptian military attaché in Washington, at a diplomatic function. Herzog began by expressing sharp opposition to Ghālib's General Assembly speech against German reparations to Israel. He expressed his astonishment that Egypt is investing so much effort in the campaign against reparations. Ghālib replied that it is a matter of principle. Herzog reminded Ghālib that the Jews and Israel were partly responsible for the support Naguib enjoyed in the United States, yet his regime keeps on disappointing Israel. Ghālib admitted that the Jews' attitude to Naguib had been of help in public relations in the United States, but asked why Eban, speaking at the UN, had expressed doubts about the success of the Egyptian agrarian plan. His speech had offended Egypt. Herzog and Ghālib discussed the prospects for an accord. Ghālib admitted that he does not believe that Israel has expansionist intentions, but pressed strongly on repatriation of the refugees. Ultimately, he said, the Arab countries will absorb the refugees and benefit from the labor force they represent. Israel would yet regret refusing to take them back. Herzog stated that Israel is willing to discuss all issues in the context of a peace agreement; he finds it hard to understand why Egypt is not willing to do the same. The Egyptians cannot demand concessions before peace talks begin. Ghālib said that simply sitting down with Israel, an act tantamount to accepting it as part of the region, would be the greatest concession of all, because Israel cannot long survive in the region without the Arabs' consent. Herzog said that the Arab boycott against Israel has merely strengthened its economy, whether through the discovery of natural resources or the establishment of commercial relations around the world. Their lack of ties with Israel is costing the Arabs, too, in economic terms. Ghālib repeated that he does not dismiss the possibility that Israel could exist among the Arab countries, just as Jews had lived for centuries among the Arabs.

In view of Ghālib's close ties with Naguib, Herzog concludes that both the present conversation and future contacts with Ghālib are important.

Note

1. See Vol. 7, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, pp. 306–307 and 331, and No. 508.

65. Sh. Bendor (Tel Aviv) to A. Eban (Washington). 8 February 1953

Copy: 93.08/357/43

Bendor reports on Sharett's meeting with the U.S. ambassador on 6 February, at which he was also present. Sharett informed the ambassador that, having waited a year, Israel now intends to renew its request for nonreimbursable military assistance. He expressed concern at Byroade's remarks to Goitein[1] to the effect that the United States is about to bolster Naguib and supply him with arms, on the assumption that providing weapons to Israel before or at the same time as to Egypt would be prejudicial to the objective of drawing Egypt into the regional defense organization. Sharett argued that American policy is mistaken, in that it rewards a country that rejects peace and bypasses a country that wants peace. Israel would find it hard to explain such a policy to its citizens. Israel's position is as follows: (1) It is impossible to organize the region in the absence of peace. (2) Israel, as the first to request nonreimbursable military assistance, should also be the first to receive it. (3) The Arabs are not to be relied on unless they provide guarantees of their intentions and undertake to defend themselves against an attack mounted from outside the Middle East. (4) Israel will continue to press for military aid.

The ambassador refused to deny or corroborate press reports concerning the provision of weapons to Egypt via Italy. He spoke of Naguib's importance and of the danger posed by the Soviets to the region, and to Israel in particular. He hinted that he has certain information concerning Egypt but has not yet been authorized to discuss it with the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister.[2] Bendor said that what was disquieting in Byroade's remarks was his conditioning of military aid to Israel on agreement by Arab countries. This represents a deviation from American policy on economic and technical aid. At the end of the meeting Sharett reported on the talk with Vigier concerning Jordan and Syria.[3] The ambassador raised the issue of Israel's promise to release one million pounds sterling from the blocked accounts.[4]

Notes

1. See No. 41.

2. Davis was apparently alluding to the results of Bunche's meetings in Egypt. See No. 77.
3. In their meeting on 24 January 1953, Dayan proposed that Vigier meet with a high-ranking officer of the Arab Legion, such as al-Jundi or even Glubb, in order to put an end to the infiltrations and thereby reduce tension on the border. (See Gaon's report of the meeting, 26 January 1953, 130.02/2429/4.) On the meeting that eventually took place between representatives of the two sides, see No. 127.
4. See No. 73 and n. 3 there.
5. Compare Davis's account of the talk in *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1120–21.

66. A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram). 8 February 1953

Notes

1. See Nos. 74 and 76.
2. See No. 105.
3. The two visited the United States from late May until early July of 1953. No records of the conversation alluded to here have been found. At the time, Bedell Smith was director of the CIA.
4. Sharett endorsed Eban's line. (See telegram IW39, 10 February 1953, 130.09/2309/12.)

67. Western Europe Division (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Embassy in Paris. 9 February 1953

Coded Tel.: L400; Outg.: 130.09/2345/3

The ambassador in Paris is instructed to meet with René Mayer[1] before the latter leaves for talks on Middle East issues in London and Washington. The ambassador is requested to point out the following: (1) It is impossible to organize Middle Eastern defense without a prior solution to the problem of regional conflicts and peace. (2) It is a mistake to imagine that arms supplies to Arab countries would in and of themselves contribute towards a solution to problems like the Suez Canal, the Sudan, and Israel. On the contrary, they might well encourage Arab obstinacy and greater demands. The objective of Arab policy, which at the deepest level is anti-European, is to take advantage of the differences of opinion in the Western camp. (3) Supplying weapons to the Arabs would simply fan the arms race, endanger the region's economy and Israel's security, and enhance pan-Arab extortionism. (4) It is in the West's best interests to strengthen Israel, not only because of its domestic and international policies but also because this is the method to persuade the Arabs to change their ways.

Note

1. Premier of France from 8 January to 28 June 1953.

68. Editorial Note

Government Discussion of the Demilitarized Zone in Jerusalem, 9 February 1953

At a meeting of the Government on 9 February, Ben-Gurion reported on the occupation by Israeli citizens of the Arab College near Government House in Jerusalem on the night of 6–7 February. After filling in the background to the incident, he said that, because of a difference of opinion between himself and the Foreign Minister, he wished the Government to decide how to react to the UN demand that the premises be evacuated immediately. Ben-Gurion related that the decision to send Israeli citizens into the Arab College had been taken by the General Staff with the approval of the Foreign Ministry but without the Minister's personal knowledge. The decision to occupy the college, situated in no-man's land, was taken after the Arabs had illegally seized the Augusta Victoria hospital and the village of 'Isawiya in the no-man's land in northern Jerusalem in 1952; despite Israel's protests, UN truce observers had not dealt with the matter.

Sharett, who believed that the decision to occupy the Arab College was fundamentally mistaken, had proposed evacuating the site immediately and avoiding any unnecessary confrontation with the UN. Since, however, he lacked the authority to order the Israelis out, he had recommended to the UN officers that they contact the Prime Minister. Their meeting with the Prime Minister never took place. In the meantime, the Jordanians had threatened to take steps against Israel if it did not evacuate the site forthwith.

Ben-Gurion told the Government that evacuating the college at this stage would be interpreted as bowing to the Jordanian ultimatum—and this was one more reason for not doing so. He contended that the UN must apply the same standard to both Israel and Jordan and proposed issuing a statement that Israel would agree to evacuate the Arab College only if the UN undertook to evict the Arabs from Augusta Victoria. He was opposed to a unilateral Israeli withdrawal.

Sharett criticized the fact that decisions were made by the military echelons without taking into account the political complications liable to ensue. He explained that the operation had been conducted by the army, which had employed citizens recruited for night-time guard duty. He proposed that Israel inform the UN of its willingness to evacuate the college within a week, while at the same time raising once more the issue of Augusta Victoria.

In the discussion that followed the presentations by Ben-Gurion and Sharett, Pinhas Rosen protested that the Government had not been consulted in advance of the operation. Levi Eshkol supported Ben-Gurion's position, while Bechor Shitrit seconded Sharett. Ben-Zion Dinur expressed fear that war might break out and agreed with Ben-Gurion's analysis, although he argued that more circumspection should have been employed.

Peretz Bernstein also protested the fact that the operation had been conducted without the knowledge of the relevant ministries and without even Ben-Gurion's being aware of its details. He did not believe that war should be waged on account of a single incident and supported Sharett's approach.

Ben-Gurion vigorously countered Rosen's opinion, reminding him that during the War of Independence he used to bring important matters to the Government for a decision, but it was impossible to do this in every case. Caution was not always a virtue, he said, and could sometimes have serious consequences.

Ben-Gurion summed up the discussion by noting that there were two motions on the table. He put Sharett's proposal to the vote first, and it was approved. The decision empowered the Foreign Minister "to respond to the UN staff about preservation of the demilitarized zone in Jerusalem."

69. A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram). 9 February 1953

Note

1. The telegram has not been found; but see the Editorial Note above and No. 73.

70. R. Shiloah (Tel Aviv) to Sh. Divon (Paris). 9 February 1953

Tel.; Outg.: 130.02/2410/1

Responding to communications from Divon,[1] Shiloah instructs him to tell his Egyptian interlocutor as follows: (1) Israel welcomes the establishment of contacts with Egypt and appoints Divon as its authorized representative for this purpose. (2) It is to be regretted that the Egyptian government is not prepared to diverge from the overtly hostile policy of the Arab countries; Israel hopes that the decision to maintain this policy is temporary. (3) Israel's demand for a change in Egypt's aggressive policy implies a fundamental change of direction in the relations between the two countries. Even if Egypt does consider it necessary to continue a policy of no peace

with Israel, it should at least refrain from abrasive and aggressive manifestations and do the following: (a) stop violating the armistice agreement and Security Council resolutions, especially with regard shipping to Eilat and through the Suez Canal; (b) put an end to declarations and statements that the state of war still exists and to hints about a second round; (c) take no initiatives to intensify the anti-Israel campaign and avoid being drawn into such initiatives taken by other countries. (4) It should be made clear that for internal and external reasons the government of Israel, too, is compelled to adhere to certain policies. Hence it cannot fail to react vigorously against the supply of arms to Egypt at a time when the latter is making aggressive and threatening declarations against Israel. (5) Were relations between the two countries to improve, Israel would exert its influence in the United States and the world on behalf of Egyptian freedom from British control. (6) The Arab boycott is not compatible with Egypt's request for economic assistance, but Israel is nevertheless willing to negotiate for immediate purchase of a considerable quantity of cotton and other commodities. Israel proposes that Egypt cease hindering the passage of tankers through the Suez Canal and Israel immediately place an order for five million dollars' worth of cotton. (7) Israel once again proposes that a confidential meeting between the two parties be held at the earliest opportunity.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 47 and n. 2 there.
2. See Divon's reply to Shiloah, No. 84. Eliahu Sasson read the telegram and praised Shiloah for his moderate and considered response to Sadiq. He added, however, that despite his great trust in Sadiq he feared that sometimes he relied too much on his emotions and painted a subjective picture rather than one of the actual situation. Sasson recommended that Sadiq be asked to arrange a secret meeting of authorized representatives of the two sides, and disagreed with Shiloah's directive to Divon not to react, for the moment, to Sadiq's proposal that Divon go to Cairo. He recommended a favorable response to Sadiq's proposal in order to create direct contact with Cairo and prepare the ground for higher-level and more consequential meetings (Sasson to Shiloah, 24 February 1953, 130.02/2410/1).

71. Editorial Note

Prime Minister's Statement to the Knesset on the Explosion at the Soviet Legation in Tel Aviv, 10 February 1953

At 10 P.M. on 9 February a bomb exploded in the Soviet legation in Tel Aviv. The next day, Ben-Gurion reported to the Government on the incident and received its approval for the statement he delivered to the Knesset

later that day. The statement follows:

> It is with great regret that I must inform the Knesset of an atrocity that was perpetrated last night in Israel: an explosion in the courtyard of the Soviet Legation, which damaged the building and injured several of the legation personnel, including the minister's wife, Mrs. Yershov (minor injuries), the wife of one of the legation staff (more serious injuries), and the legation's chauffeur. The three were taken to hospital at once, where they received medical attention; the minister's wife was discharged immediately. In the name of the Government I would like to express to the injured our sincere wishes for a swift recovery. I am confident that the Knesset and the Israeli people share these wishes.
>
> Several legations are guarded by the police, including the Soviet legation. The courtyard where the explosion took place last night was guarded by the legation itself. Although the Government offered to post guards in the courtyard, the legation had not agreed to this; hence Israeli security forces have no access to the courtyard. Immediately after the explosion, high-ranking police officers appeared on the scene. The Soviet minister, Mr. Yershov, showed them what had happened in the courtyard and the building, but did not allow police experts to examine the courtyard for traces of the explosive material or footprints of the criminals who were involved in this outrage.
>
> Obviously the police investigation has not been halted, and it will continue in full force.
>
> This morning the Foreign Ministry sent the following note to the Soviet Legation:
>
> *The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs wishes to express its esteem for the Soviet Legation in Israel and to bring the following to its attention:*
>
> *The Ministry of Foreign Affairs:*
>
> 1. *Expresses the sincere regret of the Government of Israel and extends its apologies to the Soviet Legation for the atrocious crime perpetrated last night against the Legation, its staff, and facilities.*
> 2. *States that the Government of Israel is willing to pay compensation for the injuries and serious damage incurred.*
> 3. *Hereby informs the Legation that the Government of Israel published the following declaration last night:*
>
>   *"The Government expresses its horror and revulsion at the criminal attack perpetrated this evening against the Soviet Legation in* Tel *Aviv. Every decent citizen feels revulsion at this insane act that not only damaged a foreign diplomatic mission but also struck at very soul of the State itself. Every effort will be made to apprehend the offenders. When they are caught, they will be tried immediately and receive their due punishment. The Government expresses its sincere regret and sorrow to the Soviet minister and the staff of the Legation, and in particular to those who were in-*

jured and are currently receiving medical care."

4. *Requests that the Legation allow police experts to examine the scene of the explosion in the Legation's courtyard as soon as possible, in the hope that they may find shrapnel or other clues that will help them track down the criminals who last night carried out this abominable act against the Legation.*

The Foreign Ministry takes this opportunity to again express its fullest esteem to the Soviet Legation.

This morning, after receiving the note, the minister agreed to allow police experts to examine the scene of the crime. I deem it my obligation to add several comments to the Foreign Ministry's note, intended for ourselves.

The hoodlums who perpetrated this odious crime have shown themselves to be the foes of the State of Israel far more than they are the enemies of a foreign state. If Jewish patriotism was supposed to be the motive for their demented prank and their intention was to stand up for Israel's honor—they have done precisely the opposite, besmirching Israel's name through this foolish crime.

The State of Israel maintains and will continue to maintain normal relations with every peace-loving country. The foreign legations in our country, both large and small, have a special status of prestige, security, and privileges among us, not only by virtue of international and Israeli law and custom, but also because they are the guests of the nation and the country. Anyone who harms them harms, first and foremost, the prestige and status of the State of Israel.

Our state is founded on the rule of law. Only the competent elected representatives of the state may determine its domestic and foreign relations. The criminal act of hooliganism perpetrated yesterday in the courtyard of the legation undermines the sovereignty of the State of Israel and profanes the honor of the Jewish people.

We cannot ignore the fact that the despicable crime perpetrated yesterday in the courtyard of the Soviet Legation was not the first of that nature. Criminals planted a bomb in the home of a minister in the Government of Israel, the late [David Zvi] Pinkas of blessed memory. This was followed by an attempt to leave a time bomb in the Foreign Ministry of Israel. Now a bomb has gone off in the Legation of a mighty power with which Israel has had sound relations almost from its very first day.

The Government considers itself duty-bound to do everything in its power to uncover the source of such criminal actions that endanger the security of the state and to root out the pernicious epidemic of violence against both domestic and foreign targets. At this juncture, we must allow the police to continue their searches and inquiries, in order to track down the offenders, bring them to trial, and punish them with the full severity of the law.

The Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee decided that there was no need to hold a debate on the Prime Minister's statement. After Ben-Gurion spoke, members of the opposition called for a Knesset debate. The request was referred to the Knesset House Committee for a decision (*Divrei ha-Knesset*, Second Session of the Second Knesset, Vol. XIII, pp. 682–83).

72. President Ben-Zvi to the Minister of the Soviet Union in Israel. 10 February 1953

Copy: 130.02/2457/16[1]

The President expresses his shock at the explosion in the Soviet legation in Tel Aviv and refers to the condemnation published by the Government.[2] He views the event as "a crime against the State of Israel" and "a criminal act that defiles the good name of Israel among the nations." He offers his condolences to the minister and asks him to pass them on to his wife and legation staff.

Notes

1. The initiative to send the letter of apology came from President Ben-Zvi himself, who was supported in this by Sharett. The letter was drafted in the President's bureau. See Ben-Zvi to Sharett, 10 February 1953, 105/1762/47.
2. See Editorial Note above.

73. W. Eytan to M. Sharett. 11 February 1953

Notes

1. See No. 68 (Editorial Note) and No. 69.
2. See No. 12, n. 2.
3. The text of the proposal is as follows: "In view of the fact that the major part of the central sector of the Demilitarized Zone would go to Israel as a result of the modification of the Demarcation Line along the course of the river Jordan, this modification of the Demarcation Line would put Syria to a considerable disadvantage. Consequently, Syria would require the Darbashiya area and the strip of land to the North (East of the Huleh marshes), in order to be in a position to compensate Arab landowners who have left the Demilitarized Zone, as well as the inhabitants of Shamalne who may express the desire to leave their lands." (See memorandum from Comay to Sharett, 11 February 1953, 130.02/2434/3.) For further details on the Syrian proposal, see Moda'i to the head of the Operations Division of the General Staff,

17 February 1953; Gaon to the Operations Division of the General Staff, 18 February 1953, 130.02/2434/3.

4. In a consultation involving Eytan, Gaon, Tekoah, and Comay, it was agreed that Israel should adopt a positive stance towards the Syrian proposal and not reject it outright merely because it did not fully meet Israel's request to restrict the talks to the partitioning of the demilitarized zone. They recommended that the Foreign Minister and General Staff view the proposal and Vigier's explanation as a Syrian agreement in principle to Israel's position, with the addition of a fundamental claim on their part—that suitable compensation be granted to Arab landowners who would suffer as a result of the partitioning of the demilitarized zone. (See Comay to Sharett, 11 February 1953, 130.02/2434/3.)
5. See Nos. 95 and 124.

74. A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram). 11 February 1953

Notes

1. The memorandum has not been printed here. But see the document entitled, "American-Israel Relations, Observations by the Ambassador of Israel," 11 February 1953, 130.20/2479/10. Eban conveyed two additional documents to Bedell Smith: Israel's application for the renewal of military assistance (see No. 75) and a letter setting out Israel's desire to supply Israeli-manufactured goods to the U.S. armed forces in Europe as part of the offshore procurement program (11 February 1953, 130.20/2487/1).
2. See Goitein's detailed report on the talks, 11 February 1953, 130.02/2382/22. Cf. the American account in *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1125–28.

75. Note from the Israel Ambassador in Washington to the Secretary of State of the United States. 11 February 1953

Notes

1. Eban conveyed the letter to Bedell Smith during their meeting that morning. See No. 74 and n. 1 there.
2. See Vol. 7, No. 43.
3. On 27 February, Dulles sent official confirmation of receipt of the letter. He wrote that the State Department was giving attention to the problems raised in it and that the Embassy would be notified when a decision was made affecting Israel (93.08/361/8).

76. A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram). 11 February 1953

Notes

1. See No. 74.
2. See No. 25, n. 4.
3. See No. 74, n. 1.

77. R. Shiloah (Tel Aviv) to E. Sasson (Rome). 11 February 1953

Copy: 130.02/2410/1

Further to their correspondence on the talks with Egypt,[1] Shiloah reports on Bunche's conversations with Sharett, Eytan, and himself, in which Bunche told them of his meeting with Mahmud Fawzi, who was accompanied by Mahmud Riad and Abbās Mustafā 'Ammār. Fawzi had informed Bunche that Egypt has concluded that an attempt must be made to try and solve the Palestine conflict. The needs of the Middle East and the desire to contribute towards stability in the region have persuaded Egypt that an effort must be made to reach a solution. Fawzi defined three problems: (1) The refugees: He and his colleagues have concluded that the only solution is to resettle them in Arab countries, not their repatriation to Israel. Egypt is giving thought to absorbing refugees; when the time comes this will be done openly and not covertly. (2) Territorial continuity between Egypt and the other Arab countries. (3) The internationalization of Jerusalem: Fawzi admitted that this is a secondary problem. He agreed that Bunche convey his remarks to the Israelis.

Bunche was asked to submit Israel's response to Fawzi, as follows: (1) Israel is pleased to hear that Fawzi recognizes the need to solve the disputed problems and proposes a meeting forthwith between authorized representatives of the two sides. (2) Israel agrees with Fawzi's position on the refugee problem, which matches its own policy. Expediting the matter requires a meeting and negotiations. (3) At that meeting Israel is prepared discuss any proposal raised by Egypt. Bunche promised to deliver the message as soon as he returns to New York.[2]

Shiloah added information on two additional proposals to meet with the Arabs: (1) An American Jew who had served in Germany has reported that Sa'id al-Imām[3] wishes to meet with an Israeli representative in Europe. (2) There have been feelers on behalf of Kamāl Junblāt[4] and Akram Hawrāni[5] for a meeting with an Israeli representative in Europe. Shiloah has re-

plied affirmatively to the latter proposal but not to the former. He assumes that he will also respond favorably to the first proposal.

Notes

1. See No. 47 and n. 2 there, and No. 70 and n. 2 there.
2. See No. 85, n. 2.
3. Bunche kept his promise. On 12 February he reported to Eban and Rafael on his second talk with Fawzi in Cairo, after his return from Israel: Bunche informed Fawzi of Israel's reaction to the Egyptian initiative; Fawzi evinced interest and promised to inform Naguib forthwith. See the Rafael to Eytan, telegram X496, 13 February 1953, 130.09/2330/19; cf. *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, p. 1121, No. 560, and n. 2 there.
4. Kamāl Junblāt, member of the Lebanese parliament and leader of the Lebanese Progressive Socialist Party.
5. Akram Hawrāni (Khorani), Syrian politician and leader of the United Socialist Arab Ba'ath Party in Syria. In early 1953, after a quarrel with Shishakli, he moved to Lebanon.
6. In his reply, Sasson expressed his gratification at the positive response of Foreign Ministry officials to Mahmud Fawzi's remarks as relayed by Bunche; he hoped that their moderate and considered tenor would play their part in helping extricate Israel from the stalemate in its relations with the Arabs. (See Sasson's letter to Shiloah, 17 February 1953, 130.15/3744/1).

78. Sh. Eliashiv (Moscow) to S. Bazarov (Moscow). 11 February 1953

Copy in Russian: 130.11/2507/2

On behalf of the Government of Israel, Eliashiv expresses profound shock and regret at the criminal act perpetrated against the Soviet mission in Israel in Tel Aviv by unknown culprits. Because no reply has yet been received to Eliashiv's request for an interview with Bazarov, transmitted immediately after the bombing incident, he has decided to convey his regrets in writing and to add his profound personal sorrow and abhorrence of the atrocity.

He promises that the Government of Israel will take all necessary means to uncover and punish the criminals. It has already expressed its deep regret at the incident to the Soviet minister in Israel.

Notes

1. See No. 71 (Editorial Note) and No. 72.

2. See No. 80.

79. Editorial Note

Soviet Announcement of the Severance of Ties with Israel, 11–12 February 1953

At 1 A.M. on the night of 11–12 February, 1953, the Soviet foreign minister, Andrei Vyshinsky, informed the Israel minister in Moscow, Shmuel Eliashiv, of the Soviet Union's decision to break off diplomatic relations with Israel and handed him the note that follows.

80. Note from the Government of the U.S.S.R. to the Government of Israel. 11 February 1953

Orig.: 130.11/2507/2

The note starts by mentioning the bombing of the Soviet legation in Tel Aviv, in which three people were seriously wounded, including the minister's wife. It also refers to the notes from the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs and from the President of Israel expressing regret at the "criminal act" and promising that every effort would be made to uncover the culprits.[1] However, articles emanating from circles close to the government parties, which have appeared in the Israeli press, have had a distinctly provocative tone, as have declarations by MKs of the same parties and members of the Government of Israel—especially Sharett's speech in the Knesset on 19 January,[2] in which he "openly incited to hostile acts against the Soviet Union." In light of this, the U.S.S.R. announces that it is withdrawing its minister and mission from Tel Aviv and severing relations with the State of Israel.

It also demands the immediate departure of the Israeli mission from Moscow.

Notes

1. See No. 71 (Editorial Note) and No. 72.
2. See No. 24 (Editorial Note).

81. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Tel Aviv) to Israel Missions Abroad. 12 February 1953

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2377/1

In the opinion of the Foreign Ministry, the reason given by the Soviet Union for the severance of diplomatic relations[1] is only a pretext for implementing the final stage in a political process begun in 1952 and whose roots go back even earlier. (1) The Soviet regime, which cannot tolerate any ideological reservations connected with outside influences, cannot accept any relationship between Soviet Jews and Israel. (2) Israel's democratic character and the very existence of the Israel legation in the center of Moscow is a thorn in the side of the Soviet regime. Relations are being severed mainly for internal reasons. The rapidity of the action indicates that the Soviets believe that war is possible in the not-too-distant future. Initially they had tried to destroy Jewish identification with Israel through domestic pressure on the Jews and the liquidation of Jewish institutions. In the satellites, they had hoped that after a handful of Jews emigrated the remainder would be ideologically integrated into the monolithic regime. Immigration from the Soviet bloc was halted in the spring of 1952 and promises about limited future *aliya* were violated. In November, 1952, there was the Slanský trial,[2] followed by a savage anti-Israel propaganda offensive. Mid-January of this year saw the arrest of the Jewish doctors[3] and escalation of the anti-Zionist campaign. Kubovy was expelled in early December 1952; the Israeli attaché in Budapest was expelled this month. There have been breaches of Israeli diplomatic immunity. The Poles and Czechs have submitted notes preparing the way for the severance of relations.[4] The terrorist provocation against the Soviet legation in Tel Aviv was exploited to conclude the process, despite Israel's apology and offer to pay compensation. The severance of relations increases anxiety for the future of the Jews in the Communist bloc.

Notes

1. See No. 79 (Editorial Note) and No. 80.
2. See Vol. 7, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, p. 299, and No. 460.
3. See No. 11.
4. See No. 63.

82. F. E. Shinnar and Ch. Yahil (Cologne) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 12 February 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2354/1

In a conversation with Shinnar, Hallstein and Blankenhorn informed him that the Cairo negotiations have been suspended because the Egyptians, contrary to their promise, had invited a delegation from East Germany and had present exaggerated demands for £250 million in long-term credits to finance the purchase of capital goods. Hallstein and Blankenhorn believe that this development will help Israel, because even the sworn opponents of the reparations agreement in the German Foreign Ministry will now realize that the Arabs are responsible for the suspension of the negotiations. They asked Israel to keep a low profile with regard to public statements about the reparations. A decision to submit the agreement to the Bundesrat[1] should be taken at the cabinet meeting on 13 February. As for fuel credits for Israel, things are moving but the end is still not in sight.

Notes

1. See No. 13 and n. 2 there, and No. 28.
2. As expected, on 13 February the Bonn government decided to approve the reparations agreement and submit it to the Bundesrat for ratification. Shinnar and Yahil cabled the decision to the Foreign Ministry, along with a recommendation that Israel respond "matter-of-factly, as if to an event that was to be expected" (telegram 21, 14 February 1953, 130.09/2354/1); see also Shinnar's letters to Eytan and Sharett of 12 and 13 February 1953, 130.02/2417/7).

83. Sh. Eliashiv (Moscow) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 14 February 1953

Coded Tel.: QIA425; Inc.: 130.09/2325/6

Eliashiv asks Sharett to heed his warnings to the effect that as long the Israel legation has not shut down, it is important to avoid excessively sharp press reactions about the matter itself and to the article in *Pravda*.[1] Everything should be done to protect the Israel legation in Moscow and its staff from even the slightest abuse. Speeches and declarations by Government ministers and officials must be avoided. Eliashiv stresses that they should already begin planning the resumption of relations; nothing should be done that might jeopardize this possibility.

Note

1. On 14 February *Pravda* carried an article entitled, "The Terrorist Act in Tel Aviv and the Perfidious Game Played by Israel's Rulers." The article summarized events leading up to the severing of relations. It quoted an Agence France Presse dispatch to the effect that "the attack was the result of anti-Soviet propaganda in Israel." Eliashiv, reporting on the article to Israel, advocated boycotting the correspondent responsible for sending the dispatch to Moscow and demanding his replacement. An investigation conducted by the Foreign Ministry revealed that the article had originally appeared in *Kol Ha'am*. (See Eliashiv to the Foreign Ministry, telegram QIA427, 14 February 1953, and R. Dafni's memorandum to the Foreign Minister, evidently written on 15 February 1953, 130.09/2325/6.)

84. Sh. Divon (Paris) to R. Shiloah. 15 February 1953

Copy: 130.02/2410/1

Divon reports on his conversation with 'Abd al-Rahman Sadiq, as requested in two telegrams from Shiloah.[1] Sadiq underscored the tremendous importance that the Egyptians attach to Israel's assistance in obtaining financial and economic aid from the United States, from both government and private sources. Divon told him that if relations improved Israel would be willing to exert its influence to achieve this end. As for the passage of tankers through the Suez Canal, Sadiq said that he greatly fears that making this stipulation at the present time could jeopardize the creation of a climate of mutual understanding; he added that Nasser had considered allowing the passage of ships except for those carrying military *matériel* and fuel. He assumes that improved relations would make it possible to reach an accord on the issue of tankers as well. At the moment, however, this would be a drastic step that would place the Revolutionary Command Council in a very awkward situation vis-à-vis the other Arab countries.

Divon's assessment: (1) His impression from his talks with Sadiq and from passages in correspondence that Sadiq showed him is that the latter has done important and useful work presenting Israel's position to his Egyptian colleagues. Divon is confident that Sadiq is convinced that a settlement with Israel is in Egypt's interest. According to Sadiq, when he first returned to Egypt Nasser was unwilling to entrust him with the mission officially; it was only after lengthy discussions that he had agreed to do so. Divon believes that Sadiq can serve as an important channel for conveying Israeli opinions and perspectives, and not just to the members of the Council. (2) Against the background of instability, domestic problems, and changes liable to occur in the balance of internal forces in Egypt, there are scant prospects that this contact will evolve into serious negotiations. His talks with Sadiq demonstrate that some members of the Council evince an

interest and some willingness to examine the possibilities of an accord with Israel and to put to the test the concept—or legend—of Israel's ability to assist Egypt on various fronts. Divon recommends taking this situation into account in Israel's reactions and responses to future overtures or queries. His estimation is that the Egyptians are in no hurry to reply to Israel, because a reaction would force them to provide binding answers. There is a difference between the wish to promote cotton sales and a practical decision that leads to official commercial relations with Israel.

Note

1. See No. 70. The second telegram has not been located.

85. Sh. Bendor to A. Eban. 15 February 1953

Notes

1. See No. 73 and n. 3 there.
2. Bunche visited Israel on 7–8 February, on his way home from a month-long tour of India and Pakistan and a brief visit to Egypt. While in Israel he met with the President, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, and senior Foreign Ministry officials, with whom he discussed various matters, including his talks in Cairo (see No. 77) and his conversation with Nehru on the establishment of relations between Israel and India. (See the partial report on the visit in Eytan's letter to the Israel Mission to the United Nations, 16 February 1953, 93.03/3055/9; see also *Davar*, 9 February 1953.)

86. A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram). 15 February 1953

Notes

1. See No. 68 (Editorial Note) and Nos. 69 and 73.
2. In reply, Eytan cabled that the persons in question had left the Arab College at the specified time and that Riley had no reason to get upset (WI53, 15 February 1953, 130.09/2310/1).

87. Editorial Note

Statement by the Prime Minister to the Knesset on the Severance of Diplomatic Relations by the Soviet Union, 16 February 1953

On 15 February, the Government discussed Israel's reaction to the severance of diplomatic ties by the Soviet Union. After lengthy deliberation it was decided that the Prime Minister would make a statement in the Knesset about the circumstances that had led up to the severance of relations. On 16 February, Ben-Gurion made the following statement in the Knesset:

> Three days after the explosion in the courtyard of the Soviet legation, of which I informed the Knesset last Tuesday, the foreign minister of the Soviet Union presented a note to our minister in Moscow, in which he announced that it had been decided to recall the Soviet mission from Israel and demanded that the Israeli mission be recalled from Moscow.
>
> The Government heard of this measure by a Great Power with astonishment and great concern; in the note presented to our minister we could find no justification for this astounding action, because the reasons given in the note have no factual basis and the international conduct of the Soviet Union itself contradicts them.
>
> The Government vigorously rejects the contention that the explosion took place while the police looked the other way. Some time ago the Foreign Ministry proposed posting police officers in the courtyard of the legation. It was the Soviet minister who turned down the offer. The absence of police in the courtyard no doubt made it easier to commit the crime.
>
> The police in the Soviet Union, too, cannot always prevent crime. In Soviet Russia the envoy of a foreign state has been murdered, but the government in Moscow did not blame its police force for the crime.
>
> Attacks on legations have occurred in many countries; there have also been attacks on Soviet legations, which did not lead the Soviet Union to break off diplomatic ties. Let us cite, for example, the murder of the Soviet minister in Warsaw in 1927, the planting of a mine in the Soviet legation, also in Warsaw, in 1930, and the attack on the Soviet legation in Riga in 1926. In none of these cases was there a severance of diplomatic relations.
>
> Immediately after the explosion became public knowledge, the Government issued a statement expressing its disgust at the despicable attack, which had done far more damage to the State of Israel than to the Soviet Union. The Foreign Ministry expressed the sincere regret of the Government of Israel and extended its apologies to the Soviet legation for the atrocious crime, and noted that the Government of Israel was prepared to pay compensation for the injuries and damage incurred. The

Soviet note contended, however, that these expressions of regret were meant only to cover over the tracks of the attackers and to evade responsibility for the act, and that they stand in contradiction to the incitement to hostile acts against the Soviet Union made by the newspapers of the coalition parties and by members of the Government and the Knesset. Singled out in this context was the speech by the Israeli Foreign Minister to the Knesset on 19 January, which, according to the note, constituted open incitement to hostile acts against the Soviet Union.

There is not a shadow of truth in this characterization of the Foreign Minister's speech. Not a single word or allusion in it may be said to constitute direct or indirect incitement to hostility towards the Soviet Union.

In that speech the Foreign Minister rejected—as was his political and moral obligation—the fabrications published in the Soviet press about Jewish physicians who ostensibly carried out abominable and shocking acts of murder in the service of a large and respected American Jewish organization and of international Zionism. On that occasion the Foreign Minister rightly stated that the Government of Israel could not remain silent while others attempted to denigrate the name of the Jewish people. In Israel we are not prepared to adopt the custom that accused persons confess to crimes they did not commit. I know of no movement anywhere in the world that is purer than the movement for the rebirth and revival of the Jewish people, which is known as the Zionist movement. Nor are there many institutions in the world that are more deserving of praise and esteem than the Joint [Distribution Committee], for its humanitarian efforts to help Jews who are uprooted, oppressed, and exploited, the world over, including in the People's Democracies.

In that speech, however, the Foreign Minister stated that "the Government of Israel has always viewed its friendly relations with the Soviet Union as a valuable asset." In this, too, he expressed the sentiment of the Government and the people of Israel.

Similarly, the assertion that the Israeli press and members of the Government and Knesset incite to hostile acts against the Soviet Union is totally groundless.

No country is as anxious for peace in the world, peace among all nations, with no exceptions, as is the State of Israel. It is avid for peace not only because of its Jewish heritage, which mandates this, but also because of the condition of the Jewish people in the world, dispersed in both east and west, and because of the vital needs of the State of Israel to develop its land and absorb masses of immigrants—a task that can be successfully accomplished only in conditions of world peace.

In Israel, however, each citizen has the right to defend the social and political ideology that appeals to him and also to oppose any social or political ideology he considers to be mistaken.

There is no basis to the argument made in the note, that in Israel the conditions for normal diplomatic activity by the Soviet mission ostensibly do not exist. In our country this mission has been guaranteed a freedom of action that our mission in Moscow never dreamt of demanding for itself.

We are not aware that the government of the Soviet Union has ever made it a condition of maintaining diplomatic relations with any country that the Communist Party in those countries have a monopoly on political and social propaganda and assessment of international developments. As in all countries where freedom of thought and speech prevail, so too in Israel it is permitted to point out the negative aspects of the Communist ideology and the damage caused by totalitarian regimes. Moreover, the State of Israel reserves the right to safeguard, in theory and in practice, its democratic regime, its Zionist vocation, and freedom of thought and speech for its citizens.

But the Government of Israel always has and will continue to adopt a policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of a foreign state. It fervently wishes to maintain our declared policy, which has been approved by the Knesset, namely: "to foster cordial relations and mutual assistance with every freedom-loving state, whatever its internal regime."

We can find no justification for the severance of relations in any act by the citizens of Israel and its Government. Nor can we find any precedent for such a rupture in the practice of government of the Soviet Union in its dealings with other countries that, like us, have a democratic regime.

To our regret, we cannot consider the note delivered to our minister to Moscow as anything other than a further step in the campaign of hostile vituperation against the State of Israel, the Zionist movement, and world Jewry, which has been conducted in the Soviet press for some time now, and which takes the shape of an official demonstration of hostility in the Slanský trial in Prague and in the libel published in Moscow on 13 January, which has continued unabated since then.

It is difficult to reconcile this hostile campaign and the rupture of ties with the State of Israel with the Soviet Union's declared policy concerning all peoples' right of self-determination and the need to strengthen peace throughout the world.

The Government of Israel again declares that, notwithstanding its firm and unshakable stand against the torrent of incitement and slander against Judaism, Zionism, and the State of Israel, it is prepared to cooperate in the future with any country that is committed to international peace, whatever its internal regime, just as it is ready to defend, as a most cherished possession, its democratic regime and its Zionist vocation.

The Government of Israel considers itself to be duty-bound, after the astonishing and regrettable step taken by the Soviet Union, to declare yet again, and with greater emphasis, that it will not tolerate any acts of

violence or organizations whose purpose is violence, no matter who they are or what form they take, even if these actions and organizations don the garb of "patriotism" or "progress" or bandy about other slogans. The Government will use all the legal powers at its disposal to uproot any attempted rioting and vigilanteeism and will severely punish the manufacture or carrying of bombs, any unlawful use of weapons, any attempt to burn down bookstores, damage automobiles, obstruct the right to free speech, and other terrorist acts aimed at intimidation, revenge, or any other objective, just as it will use all means to prevent any breach of national security or any encouragement of anti-Jewish incitement in any form whatsoever and any cooperation with the enemies of the State of Israel and the Jewish people.

I would be failing of my moral duty if I failed to add to these remarks I have made as Prime Minister on behalf of the Government a few words in a more modest capacity of longer standing, which is more important and exalted in my eyes: that of a member of the Jewish people.

During its long journey across the stage of world history, over four thousand years, in most of the countries of the world, east and west, north and south, our people have encountered unceasing manifestations of hatred and hostility, slander and incitement, persecution and torture, extermination and massacre. But its spirit has not flagged, its determination has not weakened, and its faith has not been broken. Through sublime spiritual heroism it has maintained its uniqueness and its vocation.

Over the millennia, the hatred and hostility have assumed different guises, but their content has hardly changed. Its essence is contained in the slanderous remark of one of our ancient enemies: "There is a certain people, scattered and dispersed among the other peoples in all the provinces of your realm, whose laws are different from those of any other people and who do not obey the king's laws, and it is not in Your Majesty's interest to tolerate them."

Is there anything we have not been accused of over the generations, from that time until this very day? Is there any pretext for which Jewish blood has not been shed? The blood of the millions slaughtered and incinerated by the Nazi murderers and their allies in the various countries of Europe still cries out to us. The generations-old hatred of the "scattered and dispersed people" still pervades these countries, both openly and in secret. Any fanning of this hatred, in whatever form, is liable to win the hearts and capture the sympathy of the benighted masses. Throughout history and everywhere in the world, dictatorial regimes have fanned anti-Jewish hatred and exhibited the monstrous Jewish "criminal" in various shapes and forms adapted to their milieu and age.

I may not know the exact motives and intentions that lie behind the anti-Jewish campaign that began in Prague and continues, through the instrumentality of all the prodigious means available to totalitarian

regimes, in many other countries. But as a Jew, taught by long and bitter experience, I cannot fail to be aware of the horrible and terrifying consequences of an anti-Jewish campaign for millions of our people, the remnant of European Jewry, and perhaps not only for them. It is precisely from here, the one tiny stronghold of Jewish freedom and independence, that I must sound a warning and call to the Jews of the world, and also to human conscience wherever it exists—and it does exist in every country and nation—and also to the rulers of the mighty power that is the Soviet Union.

An anti-Jewish campaign—whatever its domestic justifications—poses an enormous danger to the safety, dignity, and lives of millions of people merely because they are Jewish.

If there are Jews who are not welcome in the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies, let them emigrate—all those who wish to do so—and join those residing in the ancient and renascent Jewish homeland, which, not so long ago, the Soviet Union, along with other countries both large and small, in the west and the east, helped become an independent and sovereign state.

In many lands, Jews have been silenced through coercion and their schools have been closed. Not a single Jewish newspaper is published in the entire Soviet Union. Only those who deny their people and their human dignity have the right to speak.

Let not the Jews be silent in countries where they are permitted to voice their protests, out of human dignity and Jewish loyalty, against the slanders and libels leveled against the State of Israel and Zionism—the Jewish people's movement of liberation and rebirth—against Jewry, its organizations and eminent figures, its scholars and its leaders, in east and west.

And let not the voice of human conscience be silent this time. The evil that will befall millions of Jews will spread like a pestilence among other nations as well.

I call on the leaders of the Soviet Union, with all modesty as an Israeli and with full vigor as a Jew: Observe, also with respect to Israel and Jews, your declarations about the right to self-determination and about brotherhood and peace among all peoples.

May the voice of human conscience be heard throughout the world and not disappoint.

(*Divrei ha-Knesset*, Second Session of the Second Knesset, Vol. XIII, pp. 719–21)

88. A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram). 16 February 1953

89. Editorial Note

Submission of an Aide-Mémoire from the Government of the United States to the Government of Israel, 16 February 1953

On 16 February, the American ambassador in Israel conveyed a *note verbale* to Sharett and delivered the *aide-mémoire* printed below. Sharett said that on such an important matter he did not wish to answer immediately. He promised that the Government of Israel would convey its reply after deliberate consideration. At the same time, he pointed out the following: (a) a preliminary perusal of the memorandum gave him the impression that its authors had made no effort to understand Israel's position. He asked how the government of the United States would have behaved had similar incidents occurred along its border with Mexico. (b) Israel had obtained a document referring to an internal order from the Jordanian government to all sections of the army and the border patrol, complaining that the border patrols were negligent in stopping infiltration. This complaint indicates that the Jordanian government understood that it bore responsibility for events along the border. See *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part I, pp. 1135–36.

At the Government meeting of 22 February, Sharett reported on the receipt of the *aide-mémoire* and his conversation with Davis. Ben-Gurion gave an account of his talk with Davis on 19 February (see No. 97).

90. *Aide-Mémoire* from the Government of United States to the Government of Israel. 16 February 1953

Notes

1. See No. 62.
2. See No. 46, n. 1.
3. See No. 54 (Editorial Note).
4. See Vol. 7, No. 208.
5. See No. 46.

91. M. Sharett to A. Eban (telegram). 17 February 1953

Note

1. Eban questioned Israel's attitude in the negotiations with Syria. He argued that agreeing to territorial rectifications without the signing of a peace agreement or establishment of diplomatic relations would jeopardize Israel's fundamental position on peace, because Israel would be agreeing to settle substantive problems before the

Arabs recognized it or lifted the boycott. He added that, despite the importance he attached to resolving the problem of the demilitarized zones, this should not be done at the expense of the chances for peace, to obtain which Israel must hold on to all its cards. He asked Sharett to clarify the matter (telegram W922, 15 February 1953, 130.09/2310/1).

92. A. Yapou (Tel Aviv) to M. Comay. 18 February 1953

Orig.: 130.13/2595/8

Yapou transmits the memorandum from Sharett's conversation with Evans on 16 February 1953. Sharett had summoned the British ambassador to discuss the latest incidents along the Jordanian border and the reaction to them in London,[1] which struck him as one-sided and regrettable. Sharett reminded Evans that at their last meeting[2] the ambassador had mentioned British overtures about the border incidents to the Amman government as well, whereas the Foreign Office spokesman had noted only a British approach to Israel and had used extremely strong language. Despite Selwyn Lloyd's statement to the House of Commons that Britain had also made representations to Jordan, the impression created is that only Israel is guilty of aggression. Sharett believes that Jordan must be told to assert full control of the situation before it gets totally out of hand. Certain circles in Jordan are gloating over the fact that the British government blames Israel for the latest incidents, when their prime concern should be surveillance along the frontier. There is continual cross-border infiltration, which sometimes triggers an Israeli reaction. There is no systematic infiltration by Israelis into Jordan. Sharett argued that the phrasing of British government statements implies that it condones the actions of the Jordanian authorities and allows them to evade taking concrete steps. Evans replied that the reaction in London seems to have been released before receipt of the report by the British minister in Amman. There is also a feeling that Israel's actions in Falama and Rantis had "the nature of an organized reprisal."

Sharett said that to view developments in this way is tantamount to isolating one incident from a series of events.

Evans pointed out that in any case these actions represent a violation of the armistice agreement. Sharett noted in this context that Israel had dealt severely with the Jewish refugees who had broken into the Arab College of Jerusalem,[2] because the incident could have triggered a border incident.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 60.
2. See No. 61 (Editorial Note).

3. See No. 73 and No. 86, and n. 2 there.
4. Compare Evans' report on the meeting in his telegram to the British Foreign Office, PRO, FO371/104778, 16 February 1953.

93. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 18 February 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2310/1

Eban proposes that Ben-Gurion visit the United States to present the views of Israel and the Jewish people to the UN General Assembly, which will convene in March. His reasons are as follows: (1) Communist and Arab hostility poses a dangerous threat of international isolation of Israel. (2) An appearance by the Prime Minister would help diffuse the depression that has beset the Jews. (3) The Prime Minister's presence would electrify enemies and friends alike. (4) The Prime Minister's presence in the United States would facilitate a meeting with President Eisenhower and serve as a counterweight to a possible visit by Naguib.

The visit should not include fund-raising speeches and the like.

Note

1. The same day, Sharett also cabled Eban to the effect that a proposal, backed by the Prime Minister, was taking shape to send Golda Meyerson to the General Assembly. He expressed confidence that "with her profoundly human approach she will make an impact and perhaps even restrain the Soviet reaction to a great extent" (telegram to Eban, 18 February 1953, 130.09/2309/12). Members of the Israeli delegation in New York objected to the proposal, on the grounds that Meyerson's past service as Israel minister in Moscow was no asset in this case and might well arouse dissension. On the other hand, they emphasized the historical dimension that would accompany an appearance by Ben-Gurion (Lourie to Sharett, telegram X515, 23 February 1953, 130.09/2330/19). Despite Eban's repeated requests that Ben-Gurion come, on 25 February the Government decided to send Meyerson (Eban to Sharett, telegrams 943 and 949, 18 and 21 February 1953, 130.09/2310/1). See also No. 165 (Editorial Note).

94. A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram). 18 February 1953

Notes

1. Maxwell M. Rabb, a member of the White House staff. "Ben Yishai" was the Israeli code name for David Niles, President Truman's administrative assistant.

2. See No. 76.
3. See No. 74.
4. See No. 74, n. 1.

95. Ch. Gaon to A. Vigier. 19 February 1953

Notes

1. See No. 73 and n. 3 there. See also No. 85.
2. See No. 124.

96. Y. Tekoah to Ch. Gaon. 20 February 1953

Note

1. In response to this summary, the personal adjutant to the head of the IDF Intelligence Branch wrote Tekoah as follows on 27 February 1953: "There was no discussion of the demarcation of the new armistice line and the water line, but only of M. Vigier's letter. This letter included the Syrian answer, and it is to this letter that we replied, as previously agreed upon" (see No. 73 and nn. 3–4 there). He added that "except for this letter, there are only the instructions to the negotiating committee, as approved by the Defence Minister and the Government" (130.02/2434/39). See No. 19, paragraph 1.

97. United States Division (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 20 February 1953

Coded Tel.: 76; Outg.: 130.09/2309/12

Ben-Gurion met with Davis on 19 February.[1] Sharett, Kollek, and Bendor were also present.

(1) *Military aid:* Ben-Gurion said that Israel is making great efforts to attain economic and military independence, but this is impossible without assistance from U.S. Jewry and the U.S. government. The heavy security burden hampers absorption and development. The leaders of the previous Administration understood this, but there has been no progress on the military assistance front for two years. He would like to clarify the position of the new Administration.

(2) *Regional defense:* The United States cannot afford to abandon the Middle East and must defend it. There are three possibilities: (a) peace in the region, with all countries participating in its defense; (b) in the absence

of peace, a separate agreement between the West and every country in the Middle East willing to commit itself to defending it; (c) in the absence of both peace and such separate agreements, defense of the region must be based on whatever country is willing to participate. Ben-Gurion mentioned his conversation with Marshall in 1951[2] and asked for information on Middle East defense plans, Israel's role in them, and what the United States is prepared to do to strengthen Israel.

(3) *The economic situation:* Israel is being forced to spend development funds to repay debts; it may request a long-term loan from the U.S. government or the Export-Import Bank. Israel's objective is to be independent of support from the United States and its Jewish community. This might be possible in a number of years were Israel allowed to continue development. Davis expressed his admiration for Israel's efforts to put its economic affairs in order.

(4) *The* aide-mémoire *on reprisal actions:*[3] Ben-Gurion said that he had been offended by the tone of the *aide-mémoire*. He agrees that the United States has the right to intervene in the affairs of others, provided the intervention is just. The *aide-mémoire* contained distortions, such as describing the situation as if there was also infiltration from the Israel into Jordan, and the distinction between Falama and the bombing of the train, which was well-planned. It makes no difference whether people are assaulted or killed by regular or irregular troops. The Jordanian government and the Arab Legion are able to prevent infiltration; if they fail to do so the Government of Israel is duty-bound to defend its citizens. It is not enough to condemn the reprisals; the U.S. government must also indicate a method for halting infiltration. Israel, too, would prefer not to mount reprisals; but without them infiltration would increase and there would be a danger of a general conflagration.

Davis expressed understanding of the seriousness of the situation. He explained that the State Department reaction was a result of accumulated displeasure with reprisal raids, going back to al-Hamma.[4] The State Department believes that such actions are an obstacle to peace and tranquillity in the region and are consequently detrimental to American interests. The United States is concerned about the entire region, including Israel.[5]

Notes

1. The conversation took place after lunch in Ben-Gurion's residence on the eve of the American ambassador's departure for a vacation in Washington. Full details can be found in the report Bendor dispatched to Eban, 22 February 1953, 93.08/357/43; cf. *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 2, pp. 1140–42.
2. Ben-Gurion had met with then–U.S. Secretary of Defense George Marshall on 4 May 1951. See Vol. 6, No. 156.
3. See No. 90.

4. On 5 April 1951. See Vol. 6, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, pp. 95–96.
5. In his diary, Ben-Gurion recorded his reactions to the talk as follows: "In the end, I spoke sharply concerning the note about the reactions. My reply made an impression on him—but the matter does not depend on him. . . . He feebly attempted to defend the note, but it was obvious that he agreed with me" (Ben-Gurion's diary, 19 February 1953, IDF archives).
6. George Kennan, former U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union.

98. F. E. Shinnar and Ch. Yahil (Cologne) to M. Sharett. 20 February 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2354/1

Shinnar and Yahil report on progress towards approval of the reparations agreement and on a new problem to be overcome. There is agreement in the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Bundesrat on the contents of the agreement, except for the paragraph barring ships flying the German flag from conveying goods to Israel. The argument is that no German government could authorize a German law prohibiting German ships from sailing to an Israeli port. It was decided that the German government will publish the following declaration:

> While the discussions were taking place at The Hague, it was not yet possible to revoke the Israeli regulation that bars German-flag ships from anchoring in Israeli harbors. In consequence, the Federal Government agreed to the arrangement stipulated in Letter 6.[1] Together with the other party to the agreement, however, it has always viewed this arrangement as merely provisional. The fact that this is merely a provisional arrangement is also reflected in Paragraph 8, Section 3 of the agreement, which explicitly refers to the shipment of goods by German maritime carriers. The Federal Government is convinced that after the agreement enters into force and its implementation begins, the time will come to negotiate with the Government of Israel on an end to this provisional arrangement, so that ships flying the German flag may anchor in Israeli harbors.[2]

Shinnar and Yahil recommend that the Government accept this proposal so that the agreement can be ratified.

Notes

1. In the sixth letter appended to the reparations agreement, in accordance with paragraph 8C of the agreement, Germany agreed that goods for Israel would be shipped

aboard vessels flying the flag of a third country. See *Kitvei amanah,* Vol. 3, No. 69, pp. 81 and 100.

2. See No. 100 (Editorial Note) and No. 101.
3. See No. 141.

99. E. Sasson (Rome) to the Western Europe Division. 20 February 1953

Coded Tel.: MPR288; Inc.: 130.09/2356/4

Sasson reports on his talk with Pacciardi, the Italian defense minister. The latter reported on his visit to Egypt and the letter of appreciation he had received from the U.S. State Department for his successful talks there. He said that Italy intends to send delegations to Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia, as well, for talks on Middle East defense.

He met with Mahmud Fawzi, who told him that Egypt and other Arab countries are firmly resolved to join the Middle East defense organization, if these talks are crowned with success. Fawzi informed the Americans of this and asked them to begin devising plans for supplying military equipment to the Egyptian forces. In Pacciardi's opinion, these are fateful times; Israel must adopt a clear policy, present its demands to the Americans, and mobilize its forces in the United States, Britain, and other countries in order to realize them. In the wake of the severance of diplomatic relations by the Soviet Union, some believe that Israel is helpless and totally dependent on Western mercies. This, they assert, should make it possible to exert pressure on Israel in the spirit of the Arab demands. As one who sympathizes with Israel he would be glad to help Israel if it provides him with the necessary material. From his contacts with Naguib he infers that the problem of Palestine has lower priority than those of the Sudan, the Suez Canal, and the Middle East defense organization. He senses an Egyptian willingness for some form of détente with Israel.[1]

Note

1. See Sasson to Najar, 22 February 1953, 130.02/2381/18.

100. Editorial Note

Government Debate on the Transport of Goods in German-Flag Vessels, 22 February 1953

Sharett conveyed to the Government the contents of a telegram from

Shinnar (No. 98). He requested approval of a proposal that after the reparations agreement was ratified by the Bundesrat plenum, the German government would announce the shipment of goods to Israel aboard German-flag ships. Rosen read out Letter 6a, appended to the reparations agreement, which stated that the ships to be used would fly the flag of a third country, that is to say, they would not sail under the German flag (see No. 98, n. 1).

In the discussion that followed Sharett's report, Ben-Gurion supported the change, Israel Rokach vacillated, and Golda Meyerson was opposed. She criticized the Germans' attitude and asserted that they must honor the agreement to the letter. Eshkol proposed informing the Germans that Israel accepted the proposal, but not during the first year of implementation of the agreement. Dinur proposed organizing Israel's merchant fleet and loading the cargo on Israeli ships rather than on German vessels. Sharett, careful not to accuse the German government of trying to complicate matters, asked whether it was worth insisting on this point after Israel had successfully warded off the Arab onslaught. He supported Eshkol's proposal and suggested that German ships not berth in Israeli harbors during the first year; the matter would be reviewed after that.

Summing up, Ben-Gurion opposed Meyerson's approach from both the Zionist and political perspectives. He disagreed with her argument that the Germans were resorting to extortion and evasion and pointed to their resistance to Arab pressure. In point of fact, he said, the Germans were right, since there was a limit to what could be demanded of them: "They have admitted that they must atone for their sins, but can we expect them to spit in their own faces?" Ben-Gurion doubted whether "it had been wise to introduce this paragraph" in the first place. He opposed the idea that it was forbidden to receive reparations from the Germans and insisted that it was a Zionist and Jewish duty to recover from them as much as possible. Israel had succeeded, against all odds, in obtaining the reparations. The State of Israel had had the immense privilege of establishing the principle of reparations in international relations. Furthermore, there was no greater imperative than facilitating the development of the country. Ben-Gurion viewed the attempt to boycott one state in the international community as a symptom of a Diaspora mentality that must be discarded. "This wound has not healed, nor will it soon." But it was not possible to boycott an entire country. He requested that they show consideration for the German request, since, "if we want them to understand us, we must understand others, even the enemy." Nor should the new Germany be viewed as an enemy.

Joseph Sapir opposed the proposal. He said that the assumptions put forward by Ben-Gurion had also existed when the agreement was signed, and nothing had changed since then. Moshe Shapira was also opposed and rejected Ben-Gurion's argument.

Because of the urgent need to reply to the Germans and because of the special sensitivity of the topic, it was decided that no unequivocal decision would be adopted. Instead, Sharett would be empowered to declare in principle the Government's agreement to rescind Paragraph 2 of Letter 6a, appended to the reparations agreement; but the announcement would not be formulated until the next cabinet session. It was also decided that the negotiators in Germany would not inform the Germans of this agreement in principle unless it became necessary to do so. (See below, No. 101, n. 2.)

101. M. Sharett (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Mission in Cologne. 22 February 1953

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2354/2

Sharett reports on the tense Government debate on the issue of German ships.[1] He recommends that no commitment be made to the Germans until the issue is discussed once more by the Government, with Shinnar's participation. He adds that the delegation can give its consent in principle only if there is no other way to avoid postponement of ratification of the agreement. Sharett suggests that Shinnar consider two proposals while en route to Israel: (1) the Minister of Justice's proposal to abrogate Letters 6a and 6b instead of issuing amended declarations; (2) that in exchange for Israel's agreement to cancel the ban, the Germans agree not to send German ships to Israel during the first year of the agreement without Israel's prior approval.

Notes

1. See Editorial Note above.
2. The discussion took place on 1 March, with Shinnar present. After the explanation, the Government, by a vote of 9 to 3, decided to accept Shinnar's proposal to notify the German government that Israel agreed to the deletion of the following clause from letters 6a and 6b appended to the reparations agreement: "the ships to be used shall be ships sailing under the flag of a third country." On 3 March, Shinnar sent Hallstein the text of the Government's decision; on the same day Hallstein notified him of the German government's acceptance of the amended version (130.02/2417/7).

102. W. Eytan (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 22 February 1953

Circular: 130.02/2417/7

Eytan instructs the heads of missions to do all they can to ensure a favor-

able public response, in the countries to which they are accredited, to the reparations agreement with Germany, which is on the verge of approval. He is referring particularly to the press and other public forums, including press communiqués by the mission heads and press conferences. Eytan adds that the reparations agreement affords a sterling opportunity to highlight the Germans' exemplary attitude in the face of Arab threats to take action if the agreement were ratified. Despite such threats, the Germans have not been deterred. They called the Arabs' bluff and not one of the threats has been implemented.

Note

1. See No. 100 (Editorial Note), and No. 141.

103. M. Sharett (Tel Aviv) to D. Ben-Gurion. 23 February 1953

Orig.: IMDEA 532.73/164

Sharett expresses his concern that the investigation of the bombing of the Soviet mission in Tel Aviv shows scant prospects of finding the culprits. He fears a double failure: not preventing the bombing and not being able to identify the perpetrators. Hence he suggests the immediate appointment of an inquiry commission to determine who was responsible for the failure to prevent this loathsome act. He is worried that the outward equanimity demonstrated by Israel in this matter may have serious repercussions in the future.

Note

1. See No. 71 (Editorial Note).

104. A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram). 23 February 1953

Notes

1. See Vol. 6, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, p. 257.
2. One word is missing in the original.

105. A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram). 26 February 1953

Notes

1. See Nos. 74 and 76.
2. See No. 97.
3. See Eban to Dulles, 26 February 1953, 130.02/2414/27.
4. Dulles was a member of the U.S. delegation to the third UN General Assembly, which convened in Paris in the autumn of 1948 and discussed the Bernadotte Plan. See Vol. 2. See also Goitein's detailed report on the talk and his impressions of Dulles, 27 February 1953, 130.02/2414/27.

106. Meeting: M. Fischer–L. Marchal. 26 February 1953

Notes

1. In 1952, some 5,000 Moroccan Jews came to Israel within the framework of "selective immigration." Until then, the French colonial authorities had looked with favor on emigration to Israel. According to Zeev Haklai, who coordinated immigration from Morocco, after the anti-French riots of December 1952 the authorities began to place restrictions on emigration, probably under pressure from the sultan and perhaps on the assumption that the Jewish minority might be able to counteract the independence struggle of Morocco's Arabs. (See Haklai to Sharett, 17 March 1953, 130.02/2398/1.)
2. The Madrid Convention of 1880, by which the signatories—the European powers and the United States—regulated the status and privileges of foreigners in Morocco and recognized its independence and territorial integrity.

107. Y. Meroz (Ankara) to E. Najar. 27 February 1953

Copy: 130.02/2412/1

Meroz analyzes the Turkish foreign minister's speech to parliament during the debate on the state budget. With regard to Israel, the foreign minister spoke of "mutual friendship" and, by way of example, cited the planting of the Atatürk forest, a ceremony attended by President Ben-Zvi. He expressed confidence in Israel's sense of realism and denied rumors that Turkey was planning to resolve the Palestine conflict by force. He explained that Turkey had abstained in the UN vote on the draft resolution calling for direct negotiations because "Turkey does not wish to bar the way to other solutions contained in the various resolutions of the UN General Assembly."

Referring to the Arab countries, the foreign minister spoke of "deep" or "sincere friendship" and of strengthening the vital connections with them; he said nothing of the sort in relation to Israel. Nevertheless, the minister's speech must be viewed positively, for several reasons: (1) This is the first time Israel has been mentioned at such length in an official statement by a Turkish statesman. (2) The foreign minister spoke explicitly of mutual friendship and mentioned the planting of the forest as a symbol of such friendship. (3) The speech contained a clear hint to the Arab countries that they too must display realism. (4) The remarks about Israel were incorporated in a section of the speech devoted to the countries that constitute the potential core of the Middle East defense organization.

In the wake of the speech, Meroz recommends exchanges of exhibitions, students, and journalists to enhance Israel's vital connection with Turkey.

108. A. Eban to W. Eytan (telegram). 27 February 1953

Notes

1. The telegram has not been located. Evidently it referred to the announcement by the president of the Dominican Republic, on the eve of the General Assembly, that his country would place the persecution of Soviet Jewry on the agenda of the Security Council. The announcement had not been coordinated with Israel and took its representatives by surprise. (See Evron to the United Nations Division, 11 May 1953, 130.11/2511/9.)
2. The second session of the Seventh UN General Assembly opened on 24 February. The next day Eban spoke in the Political Committee, which was drawing up the agenda for the session. He supported Poland's proposal that the danger of a new war and ways to strengthen peace and friendship between nations be placed second on the agenda. Since Eban and the Israeli delegation planned to raise the issue of anti-semitism behind the Iron Curtain during the debate on this item, they wanted it to precede other items on the agenda, in particular Czechoslovakia's proposal to discuss American intervention in the internal affairs of the East Bloc countries.

109. A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram). 2 March 1953

Notes

1. See No. 18.
2. See No. 105.
3. There is most likely a mistake here and Eban meant Article XII of the armistice agreement with Egypt, as he noted in No. 119 below, paragraph 6. Article XII gave each of the signatories the right to convene a conference of the two parties to recon-

sider, amend, or abrogate any stipulation of the agreement, except for Articles I and II. See Vol. 3, Appendix F.

4. See No. 66.
5. See No. 33.
6. As a first reaction, Sharett wrote that, without belittling the value of a periodic and dramatic reiteration of the issues of Israeli policy, he believes that an expansive exposition of a political program cannot of itself modify an entrenched political position. In his opinion, the main problems are: Is Egypt prepared to make peace with Israel? Is the United States willing and able to impose a peace settlement on it and condition any accord with Egypt on its agreement to make peace? Sharett added that Eban's proposal to inform the Americans and British that peace between Israel and Egypt is essential to the Middle East has been put into effect long since and represent no innovation. He rejected Eban's assumption that there is no encouragement of peace initiatives in Israel and cited several such initiatives to which Israel has responded favorably in recent years and the efforts it has made to further peace (Sharett to Eban, telegram IW111, 5 March 1953, 130.02/2455/1).

   Unlike Sharett, Rafael praised Eban for presenting his plan and wrote that if it were accepted by the governments of Israel, the United States, and Egypt, it would constitute a "historic turning point." He stressed the urgency of reaching a settlement before Egypt achieves its national goals. Rafael interpreted Naguib's moderate stance towards Israel as an attempt to allay Israel's suspicions and lull the West into believing that Egypt would not use its freedom to achieve aggressive anti-Israel goals. He believed that King 'Abdallah used the same tactic in his negotiations with Israel so as to blunt its resistance to the Jordanian annexation of the West Bank; but any chance of a settlement with him evaporated the day he achieved that goal (3 March 1953, 93.08/355/27). See also Nos. 119 and 121.

110. M. Comay to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram). 3 March 1953

Notes

1. The British military delegation that visited Israel in early October 1952. See Vol. 7, No. 385.
2. See Comay's report, 10 March 1953, 130.13/2582/6; compare Bowker's report, 2 March 1953, PRO, FO371/104236.

111. Editorial Note

The Coordinated Reaction of Foreign Representatives to Israel's Intention to Transfer the Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem

The envoys of the United States, France, Great Britain, Turkey, Italy, Belgium, and Australia decided to coordinate their reaction to Israel's inten-

tion to transfer the Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem. They would express opposition to the transfer and leave their missions in Tel Aviv, and notify the Government of Israel to this effect. They further decided that the representatives would convey their intentions on separate days and that no announcement would be made to the press. France and the United States decided to deliver a *note verbale*. The American ambassador did so in a meeting with Sharett on 3 March; the French ambassador did so on 5 March. (See No. 112 and n. 1 there, and No. 308.) The British ambassador, who met with Eytan on 4 March, delivered both a *note verbale* and a written *aide-mémoire* (No. 113). Eytan responded to the British statement in the spirit of the comments Sharett had made to the U.S. ambassador (see telegrams from the Foreign Office to the British embassy in Tel Aviv, 2 March 1953, and from the embassy in Tel Aviv to the Foreign Office, 4 and 6 March 1953, PRO, FO371/107738; cf. Eytan to the Israel Embassy in Washington, 5 March 1953, 130.09/2377/1; see also *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1144–45).

112. United States Division to the Israel Embassies in Washington and London (telegram). 4 March 1953

Notes

1. The announcement was delivered to Sharett on 3 March. On the responses by foreign representatives to the transfer of the Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem, see No. 111 (Editorial Note).

2. Sharett referred to five shooting incidents involving the Jordanians that had taken place in the Beit Guvrin area since 19 February, the latest on the night between 28 February and 1 March. The Jordanians accused IDF troops of killing unarmed shepherd boys in Jordanian territory and of attacking the Arab village of Falama. Israel rejected both accusations and denied that those killed were unarmed boys or that the IDF had violated Jordanian territory. A committee of inquiry set up by the Mixed Armistice Commission supported the Israeli contention that the incident had occurred in Israeli territory. At a press conference on 1 March, Nashashibi compared the al-Bureij incident to Deir Yasin and accused IDF soldiers of killing shepherds in Jordanian territory and of mutilating the corpses. (See United States Division to Sharett, 3 March 1953, 130.02/2429/4; *Davar,* 1 and 2 March 1953.)

3. From September 1951. See Vol. 6, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, pp. 257.

4. See No. 206 (Editorial Note).

5. See also Sh. Bendor's detailed report on the conversation, 8 March 1953, 130.02/2414/27; compare *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, p. 1147.

113. *Aide-Mémoire* from the Government of the United Kingdom. 4 March 1953

Note

1. See Vol. 7, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, p. 159.

114. Y. Shimoni (Washington) to W. Eytan. 4 March 1953

Copy: 130.02/2414/13

Shimoni reports on Eban's conversation with the Ethiopian ambassador to the United States concerning the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and Ethiopia and the strengthening of economic ties and friendly relations between the two countries. Eban told the ambassador about his meeting on this subject with the Ethiopian foreign minister at the last session of the General Assembly. On that occasion the foreign minister had expressed concern as to the outcome of the Assembly debate on Eritrea if Ethiopia established relations with Israel at this time; he had given Eban to understand that it was preferable to wait until after the debate. Now that the Eritrean problem has been solved, Eban suggested that they could renew discussions on the establishment of relations. The ambassador replied that he had spoken with the foreign minister and recommended the establishment of relations with Israel. He proposed that the Israel ambassador in Paris get in touch with the Ethiopian foreign minister, who was currently visiting France. Eban took note of the Ethiopian ambassador's suggestion but asked that he officially convey Israel's proposal to his government. The ambassador agreed. At the end of the meeting, the Ethiopian ambassador said that he shared Israel's concern over the Soviet Union's severance of diplomatic relations.

Eban recommended that Eytan submit an official request to the Ethiopian Foreign Ministry and forgo the proposed meeting in Paris.

Notes

1. See Eytan to Eban, 6 February 1953, 130.02/2414/13.
2. See Vol. 7, No. 482.

115. D. Goitein to M. Sharett (telegram). 6 March 1953

Notes

1. President Eisenhower received Prince Faysal Ibn 'Abd al-Azīz, viceroy of Hejaz and foreign minister of Saudi Arabia, on 2 March 1953. The press later reported that the president had expressed his concern at the deterioration in U.S.-Arab relations and promised to attempt to restore the trust that had previously been a hallmark of these relations.
2. See No. 90.
3. The sentence is unclear in the original. After the words "are at peace," Byroade said: "From your side I had the feeling that you are considering how much you can pay for peace. What is it really worth to you?" (See Goitein's record of the talk, 9 March 1953, 130.02/2414/27.) See also No. 172.

116. Eastern Europe Division (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Legations in Eastern Europe. 6 March 1953.

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2377/1

Eytan instructs the Eastern Europe missions as follows: (1) to lower the flag to half mast as a sign of mourning for Stalin's death,[1] just as the Western missions are doing; (2) to refrain from paying condolence visits and signing memorial books; (3) to accept governmental invitations to memorial services.[2]

Notes

1. Stalin died on 5 March.
2. Eytan sent the following instructions to missions in the West: "Re Stalin's death you are not to fly the flag at half-mast, not to sign the memorial book at the Soviet mission, and not to participate in any other official show of mourning. Legations that fly the flag every day should not raise it at all" (telegram 34, 6 March 1953, 130.09/2377/1).

117. A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram). 7 March 1953

Notes

1. An American-Jewish businessman, formerly vice-president of the American Jewish Committee. See Vol. 7, No. 420, and n. 6 there.

2. Eisenhower's statement about Israel during the presidential campaign, made in a letter to Abba Hillel Silver dated 17 October 1952. It was made public a few days later as a result of internal rivalries in the American Jewish community. Eisenhower stressed the need for peace talks between Israel and the Arabs states and for resettling refugees in every case where their resettlement in Israel was impossible or impractical. He added that continued political and economic assistance to Israel was imperative to bolster its security, in conformity with a healthy and comprehensive American foreign aid policy.
3. Jesse Moss, president of the Jewish War Veterans, who also participated in the meeting with the president.

118. A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram). 7 March 1953

Notes

1. See No. 109 and n. 6 there.
2. See No. 77 and n. 3 there.
3. See Sharett's reply, No. 121.

119. A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram). 7 March 1953

Notes

1. The reference is to the consultation on the political situation involving the senior echelons in the Foreign Ministry, the defense establishment, and the Jewish Agency. In anticipation of the meeting, set for 8 March (see No. 120), Eban was asked to relay his thoughts on the subject.
2. See No. 117, n. 2.
3. See, for example, No. 109.
4. The dots appear in the original document and represent words in the incoming telegram that could not be deciphered.
5. See No. 121.

120. Political Consultation between the Prime Minister and the Heads of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense and of the Jewish Agency. 8 March 1953

Protocol:[1] IMDEA 230.72/897

Present were: Ben-Gurion, Sharett, Goldmann, Eytan, Makleff, Bendor, Najar, Katz, Divon, Argov, Navon and Lubrani.

Only the main points of Sharett's and Ben-Gurion's remarks are reviewed here.

Sharett began by describing the unique circumstances that had led to the convening of the consultation: (1) The advent of a new U.S. Administration, within which unfavorable winds are blowing for Israel; (2) the emerging accord between Britain and Egypt, with the consent of the United States; (3) the severing of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Israel. In light of these three developments, Sharett proposes reconsidering Israel's positions, tactics, and options for enhancing its status.

In addition to these factors, fundamental elements of Israel's situation generate a rather somber picture: the increasingly severe economic situation, which requires ever more foreign assistance, the tightening Arab embargo, and the unstable situation along the frontiers.

Israel disposes of the following resources: (1) Its international standing is still high. This asset must be preserved by opening new diplomatic representations, by visits, by increased information activities, and by attempts to win international sympathy and the like. (2) Jewish and general public opinion in the United States. It is true that one sometimes hears that the new Administration has no obligation to the Jews, but it, too, is not insensitive to its chances for re-election and the Jews' impact on American public opinion. (3) Israel occupies a strategic location in the Middle East. (4) Its military potential: Even if foreign estimation of this is somewhat exaggerated, Israel has no interest in lowering it. Israel can augment this assessment by evincing flexibility in its public relations in the military arena as well as by information campaigns. There has been a change in the Pentagon's attitude towards Israel during the last two years. The military attachés' reports to their capitals about the most recent maneuvers were extremely enthusiastic. (5) The danger of Communism in Israel: this would threaten the United States in the event of a new world war.

The political line adopted by Israel to date has been expressed in a number of ways: (1) Israel has made it known that in any case it will defend itself against any external political danger and that it is interested in contributing its share to the defense of the entire region. (2) Israel has requested military assistance in accordance with the Mutual Security Act. (3) Israel has expressed opposition to the supply of arms to the Arabs as long as there is no peace between them and Israel. It also argues that the Arabs cannot be relied upon for regional defense because they do not have democracy in their blood. (4) Israel has emphasized that regional defense is impossible without it. (5) Israel alleges that no arrangement including its participation is possible without peace; such a pact would mean trying to defend a region where a conflagration could break out at any moment. The American response to these points, except the first, has not been positive. Eban has had a number of meetings with American figures,[3] Sharett is about to leave for Washington, and Dulles is supposed to visit Israel in

May.[4] Policy decisions must be taken in advance of these meetings.

Sharett believes that, first of all, Israel should call for greater sharing of information about the negotiations between Britain and Egypt. Clearly there are some matters that they do not tell Israel about; but Israel must not acquiesce in this and should continue to advance its demands so the British will understand that Israel is a factor in the region. In particular, there must be discussions of any transfer of a portion of the British troops and facilities from the Canal Zone to Jordan.

Sharett proposes to keep on explaining that the provision of weapons to the Arabs poses a threat to Israel and to keep on castigating the innate unreliability of Asiatic countries. Such a campaign would make things more difficult for the new Administration and require it to rethink its position. Thus far, Israel has succeeded in deferring and slowing down the pace of developments and on several occasions has won itself breathing space and room to maneuver.

Israel must also keep on demanding direct aid and arms supplies. The argument to be made is that were Israel in America's place, it would not give weapons to the Arabs; but if the Americans see no alternative to arming the Arabs, they must also invest in Israel.

Regarding the British evacuation of the Canal Zone, Sharett added that this represents a revolutionary change. The question is where the British will redeploy their forces. There have been discussions about transferring the forces to the Gaza Strip, but this was rejected. Now the possibilities are Cyprus, Jordan, and Libya. Israel should appear as wanting to cooperate with the British. Sharett does not propose suggesting that the British establish bases in the Negev, but it would be a good idea to indicate a willingness to investigate the matter jointly. Sharett believes that there are advantages to the idea, because it would make Israel into a factor in British considerations and could also serve as a shield against the danger of a second round.

This line should be adopted with American knowledge. If possible it should be pointed out to the Americans that Israel's proposals to the British take into account Israeli cooperation in times of regional crises.

Sharett also proposes examining the situation regarding peace with the Arabs, especially the American aspects of this question. Eventually the U.S. will ask Israel what price it is willing to pay for peace. Sharett believes that the Arab call for a return to the 1947 borders is for external consumption only; among themselves, the Arabs do not adopt such a line. The Egyptians are concerned, though, about the problem of territorial continuity of the Arab states. Regarding the refugees too, the demand to return them is no longer serious, but the demand for the symbolic repatriation of 15,000–30,000 is sincere. Sharett fears that sooner or later the Americans will pressure Israel about the refugee question and territorial continuity. Regarding the refugees, Sharett proposes agreeing to talk about compensa-

tion and to start paying. Such willingness must be conditioned on elimination of the Arab boycott. It also must be made clear that the schedule and amount of payments will be adjusted in accordance with Israel's economic capacity.

At the same time, it must be made clear to the Americans that Israel will make no concessions about the return of refugees and territorial changes in the Negev. Neither in the northern Negev nor the southern Negev (such as Eilat) will Israel concede any territory for the sake of peace with the Arabs. Israel's territorial integrity is a *sine qua non.* Israel would be prepared to permit a corridor across the Negev in order to enable overland passage between Egypt and Jordan.

Ben-Gurion reported on the meeting between the journalist John Gunther and Naguib. Gunther was impressed by Naguib's simplicity and humility. When he asked him about Israel, Naguib replied that this question is not as urgent a question for Egypt as the Sudan is.[11]

Sharett added that Bunche visited Egypt and met with Mahmud Fawzi.[12] Fawzi said that the Egyptians are coming closer to the conclusion that some kind of accord is essential. They have three basic assumptions: (1) The refugees: they must be resettled, even in the Sinai Peninsula. Fawzi did not say explicitly that repatriation is not necessary, but this was the tenor of his remarks. (2) Territorial continuity among the Arab states. He said that consideration must be given to this point. (3) Regarding Jerusalem, the internationalization resolution must be fulfilled.

Bunche noted that he did not speak about a return to the 1947 borders or about resettlement of refugees in the Negev.

Notes

1. The original protocol is garbled and is here reproduced verbatim.
2. See No. 74, n. 1.
3. See Nos. 74, 76, and 105.
4. On Dulles's visit, see No. 206 (Editorial Note).
5. See No. 115 and n. 3 there.
6. See No. 112.
7. Ibid., n. 5.
8. Word unclear in original.
9. The journalist John Gunther.
10. The dots here and in the rest of the document appear in the original.
11. For additional details on the journalist's visit to Egypt, see Ben-Gurion's diary, 6 March 1953, IDF Archives.
12. Cf. No. 77.
13. See No. 72, n. 2.
14. See No. 97.
15. See No. 109.
16. See Vol. 7, No. 385.

17. Col. Samuel C. Gurney, military and air attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Israel. See, for example, Vol. 6, No. 54, and No. 55, n. 1.
18. One or more words are missing in the original.

121. M. Sharett to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 9 March 1953

Notes

1. Nos. 109 and 119.
2. See No. 126.

122. United States Division (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 9 March 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2309/12

On 9 March, Sharett, Eshkol, Avriel, and Bendor met with Davis, McDaniel, Russell, and Jones to discuss Israel's economic situation. Sharett reviewed developments since Eban's note of August 1953[2] and described the strenuous efforts that have been and continue to be made to balance the foreign-exchange budget and live within its strictures. He said that the radical measures of a further reduction in the standard of living, increased unemployment, and a serious slowdown of development are fraught with danger. All these means have had no influence on Israel's short-term obligations; without debt consolidation the situation cannot be remedied.

He added that Israel's short-term obligations coming due between 1 April and 1 July amount to $20 million. Israel will try to pay them itself even if this means mortgaging some of the future revenues of the potash works. If it does not succeed, it will have to try to roll over some of this debt into new short-term obligations.

Eshkol and Avriel emphasized that Israel has reduced its short-term debts during the year by $25 million. Because of the delay in the receipt of reparations, however, there is serious concern that this profit will evaporate.

Sharett said that Dulles's instructions to Waller to begin a series of meetings in Washington to discuss Israel's economic situation are meant to find a way to consolidate the short-term debt by means of another grant or a long-term loan.[3]

Notes

1. This was said during Eban's meeting with Dulles. See No. 105.
2. See Vol. 7, No. 289.
3. Compare the account of the talk in *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1150–51.

123. M. Pragai (New York) to W. Eytan. 10 March 1953

Copy: 93.03/3010/5

Pragai reports on his talk with Avtar Singh, first secretary in the Indian mission at the UN. Singh raised the topic of the establishment of diplomatic relations between their countries and explained the sequence of events and inherent problems: (1) The decision to establish relations with Israel is still valid. (2) India's Muslim minority has nothing to do with the delay in the establishment of relations. (3) The main factor is rather the Kashmir dispute. India needs the support of Arab states at the UN and fears it will jeopardize its chances for such support by establishing a diplomatic representation in Israel. (4) At present, technical difficulties, such as budget and personnel constraints, are also hindering the establishment of relations. (5) According to rumors circulating in the corridors of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, there is a vacant posting in Israel. There have been several potential candidates, but none have been appointed. (6) No headway can be made without explicit instructions from Nehru. Singh proposed that Israel renew its approach to Nehru after the seventh session of the General Assembly.

Notes

1. 3 March 1953, 93.03/3010.
2. Eytan visited India in February-March 1952, with the aim of establishing diplomatic relations between India and Israel. See Vol. 7, No. 71.

124. Report on the Meeting between the Delegations of Israel and Syria (10 March 1953)[1]

130.02/2434/3

Those attending the meeting were UN representatives, Jadid and Shatīlah for Syria, and Harkabi, Gaon, Moda'i, and Reichman for Israel. Jadid requested clarification on two points: (1) What would be the fate of lands

owned by persons residing outside the demilitarized zone, such as the inhabitants of al-Baqara, some of whom are now living in Syria and others in Israel (in Sha'ab). (2) What form of compensation would the Arabs receive for their land? He declared that Syria refuses to accept any financial compensation for lands transferred to Israel, but insists on territorial compensation and wishes to know what land they would receive.

Vigier proposed that the question of compensation be set aside for the time being and that the parties proceed to discuss modifications of the armistice line. Only after an agreement is reached on the latter issue should they return to the issue of compensation. Israel supported Vigier's suggestion. Harkabi said that Israel would not limit compensation exclusively to landowners who live in the demilitarized zone; but the form of compensation would depend on the location of the line partitioning the demilitarized zone. After this Israeli statement the Syrians agreed to open the discussion. The delegations decided to focus first on the southern demilitarized zone and then proceed to the other sectors.

The Syrians suggested a line along the boundaries of the lands of Nuqeib and Ein Gev and then joining the international border, leaving Susita on the Israeli side, continuing along the international border to Border Post 65, then southwest to the Ein Gev road, south along the base of Tel Qazir, leaving the latter in Israeli hands, and then continuing south to the Yarmuk.

The Syrians stated that their proposal is based on three factors: ownership of land, security, and sphere of influence. This is the final line they can agree to; they are not prepared to make further concessions.

Israel's representatives proposed that the line pass along map coordinate 244.5 between Ein Gev and Nuqeib and then follow the international border to Tawafiq. Tawafiq and the lands south of it would remain in Syrian hands. From BP70 the line would follow the international border to the Yarmuk. The Israelis stated that their proposal is based on the de facto situation in the area as well as on the fact that three Arab villages in the demilitarized zone (al-Hamma, Nuqeib, and Tawafiq) maintain ties with Syria. Syria's security would not be jeopardized by leaving the lowlands in Israel's hands, since it controlled the Golan plateau.

Jadid replied that this proposal merely confirms his suspicions that Israel is trying to gain control of the entire demilitarized zone by creating facts. Israel's forcible tillage of Arab lands in the demilitarized zone does not give it title to these lands. Syria rejects Israel's border proposal.

Israel's representatives answered that they have always agreed to pay compensation to anyone harmed. For security reasons, however, Israel cannot agree that the Syrians gain control of the lowlands near the Ein Gev road.

With the talks at an impasse, Vigier proposed going on to discuss other sectors. Jadid was opposed. Israel's representatives said that the Syrians have taken absolutely no account of the concessions Israel had proposed on

fishing rights and access to the Sea of Galilee, but rather seemed to take these for granted.

Israel supported Vigier's suggestion to discuss the other sectors. A meeting was arranged for 16 March.[3]

Notes

1. The document is dated 11 March 1953. The location of the meeting is not specified.
2. The list of participants has been omitted here. Attending were: Vigier, Taxis, and UN staff, Jadid and Shatīlah for the Syrians, and Harkabi, Gaon, Moda'i, and Reichman for Israel.
3. See No. 136.

125. E. Sasson (Rome) to the Western Europe Division. 11 March 1953

Coded Tel.: MPR314; Inc.: 130.09/2356/4

In a talk with del Balzo, Zoppi, and de Struval of the Italian Foreign Ministry, Sasson expressed Israel's astonishment at not having been invited to the Palermo Conference,[1] emphasized the damage to its standing, and stressed that should the Italians not accede to Israel's request Israel would be forced to turn to the friendly nations participating in the conference and make public Italy's attitude towards Israel. The Italians expressed their deep regret that the matter had not been discussed with Israel in due time, admitted their error, and apologized repeatedly. They promised that such incidents would not recur and asked Israel to understand that it was not possible to alter the format of the conference at the last minute. They asked Israel to refrain from taking any action against Italy, so as not to harm the relations between the two countries or give the Arabs cause to rejoice. When Sasson refused to be appeased, the Italians offered a compromise: (1) Sasson should convey their apologies to the Israeli Government. (2) They undertake to be more careful in the future. (3) The Italian Foreign Ministry will announce at a press conference that Israel, like all other Mediterranean countries, had been invited to the conference, but had informed Italy that for technical reasons it was unable to attend this year. (4) The Italian Foreign Ministry will send transcripts of the conference proceedings to Israel. Sasson promised to pass on their proposal and to endeavor to mollify Israel's indignation. He writes the Foreign Ministry that he feels the Italian response is sufficient compensation and suggests accepting their proposal. He recommends using the first opportunity to

announce that Israel had in fact received an invitation but had decided to decline for technical reasons. Sasson requests instructions from the Ministry.[2]

Notes

1. A conference on cultural matters was to convene on 15 March at the initiative of the Italian Center for Mediterranean Cooperation and under the patronage of the Italian Foreign Ministry. Representatives of Mediterranean and Arab states, as well as observers from other countries and from international institutions, were invited to the conference. Israel, which was not invited because of Arab opposition, viewed its exclusion as a serious affront and dangerous precedent. In a Foreign Ministry consultation, it was decided to attempt to obtain an invitation; if this proved impossible, it should get the conference postponed or request that no representative of the Italian Foreign Ministry participate. Sasson met with del Balzo before a decision had been taken on these steps (telegram from United States Division to the mission in New York, 11 March 1953, 130.09/2377/1).
2. The compromise proposed by the Italians was not acceptable to the Foreign Minister and his staff. Sasson was asked to inform the Italians as follows: (1) Israel appreciates their apology. (2) It could not come to terms with its exclusion from the Mediterranean. (3) It requests that it be sent an invitation forthwith. (4) If this is not possible, Israel will have no choice but to influence friendly nations not to lend a hand to the boycott of Israel. (5) If Israel is not invited it will be compelled to denounce the Arab boycott stratagem and express its distress that a friendly country such as Italy had been caught in its net. (See Najar to Sharett and the memorandum by the Foreign Minister, 12 March 1953, 130.09/2356/4.) Sasson met with del Balzo on 13 March and delivered the Israeli statement. Del Balzo expressed his regret at Israel's position and reiterated the difficulty of inviting Israel at this stage in the preparation of the conference. He repeated his request that Israel agree to a compromise. In the spirit of his instructions Sasson rejected a compromise. Del Balzo promised to raise the issue again at the Italian Foreign Ministry. (See Sasson's telegram to the Western Europe Division, 13 March 1953, ibid.)

126. A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram). 11 March 1953

Notes

1. See No. 121.
2. See No. 105.
3. See No. 115.
4. In a press conference in New York on 9 March.
5. In reaction to the attempt to pass a resolution at the Seventh UN General Assembly calling for direct negotiations between the Arabs and Israel, the political committee of the Arab League, meeting in Cairo on 25 December 1952, denounced the very idea of calling upon the Arabs to negotiate with the Israelis and expressed the hope that such attempts would not be repeated.

6. See No. 117.
7. See No. 115, and Sharett's reply in No. 131.

127. Meeting between the Representatives of Israel and Jordan (11 March 1953)

130.02/2453/3[1]

Gaon represented Israel at the meeting; the Jordanian representatives were Nashashibi and an Arab Legion colonel responsible for the police on the West Bank. Vigier proposed two ways to combat infiltration: independent initiatives by each side against infiltrators and concerted action.

Gaon noted that the meeting itself was evidence of a desire on both sides to improve relations between the two countries. Infiltration and its side-effects harm both of them. To Israel, it causes losses in property and life, augments tensions between the two countries, and necessitates special efforts to maintain security along the frontier. For Jordan, criminal elements among the infiltrators extend their activities within Jordan too and threaten its internal security. Border incidents endanger the lives of peaceful and innocent citizens and require the deployment of Jordanian forces to maintain security along the frontier. The Jordanian representative agreed with Vigier and Gaon, but challenged Israel's method of combatting infiltrators, which he views as the root of the problem. The Jordanian authorities have invested district governors with greater power; they are now authorized to summarily try infiltrators. Arab villagers disregard agreements and maps and cross the frontier to steal; this is their means of livelihood. Jordan cannot be held responsible for criminal acts perpetrated by individuals. He denied the charge that the Jordanian authorities are involved in or encourage acts of infiltration.

Gaon welcomed Jordan's efforts to counter infiltration but pointed out that their results are imperceptible. Jordan is responsible for implementing all sections of the armistice agreement. With some effort it could put an end to infiltration.

In reply, Nashashibi launched into a tirade about the atrocities the Israel forces are ostensibly perpetrating along the frontier. In view of this, the Israeli representative asked that the meeting be adjourned. The next meeting was set for 19 March.[2]

Notes

1. The document is marked, "From 'In the Armistice Commissions and in Israel's borders,' Bulletin No. 17."

2. Compare No. 112, n. 2.
3. The second meeting took place on the scheduled date. The Israeli representative raised proposals for solving the problem of infiltration, to which the Jordanian representative responded positively. He summarized the talk as follows: (1) Jordan is prepared to take steps to reduce tensions between the two parties. (2) The Jordanian representatives are prepared to listen to any proposal to assist its war against infiltrators, to consider it, and to submit it to their government. (3) Jordan has taken steps to deal with the problem of smuggling and is willing to intensify them. In the course of the meeting, the Jordanian representative repeated his request that detailed proposals be presented in the form of a memorandum and that Israel take note of the fact that the Jordanian authorities do not encourage infiltration and view the infiltrators as lawbreakers. He explained that no political interpretations should be attributed to these acts. (See Gaon to Foreign Ministry, 22 March 1953, 130.02/2429/4.) The memorandum requested by the Jordanian representative was submitted to him at the third meeting, on 25 March. See No. 146.

128. A. Eban to W. Eytan (telegram). 12 March 1953

Notes

1. See No. 108 and n. 2 there.
2. See No. 93 and n. 1 there.

129. M. Sharett (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Delegation to the United Nations (New York). 12 March 1953.

Coded Tel.: YA88; Inc.: 130.09/2330/13

Sharett informs the delegation that, Stalin's death notwithstanding, Israel has decided to send Golda Meyerson to the General Assembly session to take part in the anticipated debate on the worldwide persecution of Jews. He proposes that the Israeli address begin and end with an appeal to the new regime in the Soviet Union and call on world public opinion to press the Soviets to re-evaluate their policy and end its maliciousness. At the same time, the speech must recount the history of the persecution of the Jews in the Soviet Union. He believes that the new situation calls for reconsidering the advisability of introducing a General Assembly resolution on the subject but does not warrant cancelling the address by an Israeli representative. There is room for concern that if Israel fails to appear the matter will be stricken from the international agenda.

Notes

1. Dov Joseph wrote from New York that now that Stalin's death had altered the situation it would be a mistake to send Golda Meyerson to the General Assembly. He expressed his concern that "in the prevailing mood, her speech would fall on deaf ears and not elicit the desired response" (11 March 1953, 130.09/2330/19).
2. See No. 93 and n. 1 there.
3. See No. 165 (Editorial Note).

130. M. Sharett to A. Eban (telegram). 12 March 1953

Notes

1. Eban wrote that the U.S. Administration would recommend the inclusion of the following funds in the Mutual Security Act for 1953–54: (1) $62 million in economic and technical aid to Israel; (2) $100 million in military aid to Israel and the Arab states. This amount is stipulated as a separate item and not as a percentage of the military assistance to Turkey, Greece, and Iran, as was the case last year (telegram from Eban to Sharett, 9 March 1953, 130.09/2310/1).
2. During 1952, industrial diamonds were sent from Israel to Poland, in violation of Israel's commitment of 29 January 1952 not to knowingly permit shipments of strategic materials to East-Bloc countries (see note from the chargé d'affaires in the Israel Embassy in Washington to the Secretary of State, 93.08/361/7). This commitment had been given to meet the stipulations of the Mutual Defense Assistance Control Act (the "Battle Act"), which declared Israel eligible for reimbursable military assistance (see Vol. 7, No. 220 and n. 3 there). Israel explained that the shipments had been an administrative error and stated that they had been made without the Government's knowledge and contrary to its wishes and instructions. It reported to the U.S. government on measures it had taken to tighten export controls. (See draft of a letter from the Foreign Ministry to the U.S. Embassy, 16 March 1953, 130.04/1817/10; see also No. 399.)

131. M. Sharett to A. Eban (telegram). 15 March 1953

Notes

1. See No. 126.
2. See No. 112.
3. Eban replied that in the wake of Sharett's telegram their differences of opinion had significantly narrowed. He repeated his opinion that pressure must be exerted on the West to condition an accord with Egypt not only on the lifting of the blockade of the Suez Canal but also on its making peace with Israel. He agreed with all the measures proposed by Sharett to further peace, but argued that the catchword of direct negotiations was no longer effective in and of itself. Therefore he proposed: (1) in-

forming the United States that Israel is suggesting contacts in the near future, but without committing itself to a date, place, or format; (2) preparing a working paper on the form that peace with Egypt should take before the Americans submit their own proposals, which would include too many Israeli concessions; (3) urging friends and the press to lobby not only for the priority of peace over the Middle East Defense Organization, but also for a peace that Israel could accept (telegram W33, 16 March 1953, 130.02/2449/1). For Elath's and Sasson's reactions to this discussion, see Nos. 134 and 144; see also No. 149.

132. A. Eban (Washington) to W. Eytan. 16 March 1953

Copy: 130.02/2432/3

Eban asks the Foreign Ministry to draw conclusions from the incidents along the Jordanian border and especially from the sharp reactions of the United States and to some extent of Great Britain as well. In his opinion, Washington and London keep a close eye on events along the frontier. Whenever there are clashes that appear to violate the armistice agreements, such as a cross-border raid by uniformed forces or operations that threaten to ignite a general flare-up, the State Department is willing to take all measures at its disposal to stand in the breach. This disposition is exploited by elements hostile to Israel to intensify the State Department reaction.

For this reason, Eban believes that the timing of military operations must be such that their benefits are not outweighed by the harm they cause. In terms of the repercussions in Washington, the past few months have been an inopportune time for military operations, because the new Administration was "learning the ropes" and its officials were interested in political and military tranquillity in the region. It was also a period when Israel was submitting its applications for economic and military aid. Logic dictates that planners back home take into account the timetable of Israeli diplomatic activity in Washington when they contemplate military operations.

It is also important to give some thought to coordination of information efforts. Officials at the U.S. Embassy in Israel must be presented with tangible evidence of the damage perpetrated by infiltrators and must be shown, beyond a shadow of doubt, that the IDF attacks only the bases that harbor these infiltrators and targets only those responsible for the infiltrations, not women and children. A parallel information campaign must be conducted within the State Department.

Notes

1. One sentence has been omitted here.

2. See No. 69.

133. A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram). 16 March 1953

Note

1. See No. 130, n. 1.

134. E. Elath to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram). 17 March 1953

Notes

1. See No. 109.
2. Dated 2 March 1953; for its contents, see No. 33, n. 2.

135. A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram). 17 March 1953

Note

1. See No. 115.

136. W. Eytan (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Embassy in Washington.[1] 18 March 1953

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2319/2

Eytan reports on the meeting with the Syrians on 16 March. Differences of opinion had arisen on the following issues: (1) The northern demilitarized zone: The Syrians insisted on a partition based on land ownership, Israel on a partition reflecting the situation on the ground. The Syrians rejected a proposal to set up a commission to investigate these two principles and propose a partition line accordingly. (2) With regard to the central demilitarized zone, the Syrians demanded full and unlimited irrigation water rights. (3) As for the southern zone, the situation had not changed since the previous meeting.[2] (4) The Syrians demanded territorial and not financial compensation for Arab-owned land in the demilitarized zones that would remain in Israeli hands. The Israeli representatives replied that Israel is will-

ing to provide territorial compensation only to Arabs who are currently farming their land, but would pay monetary compensation to Arabs not currently residing in the demilitarized zones.

In the course of the discussion on water rights and compensation, the Syrians stated several times that they would break off the talks if Israel rejected their demands. Vigier tried to get them to moderate their position and finally asked them to consult with their government and report back whether they are willing to change their stance. Formally he put the same request to Israel's representatives. It was decided that replies would be provided by 20 March and that the next meeting would be held on 23 March.[3]

Israel interprets developments in the talks as follows: (1) Gaon's letter to Vigier[4] on the subject of compensation is a final proposal on that matter. The Syrians' latest demands indicate that they reject it. (2) The Syrian proposal for a demarcation line in the southern demilitarized zone is more extreme than their previous one, submitted to Israel via Taxis, which Israel had rejected.[5] (3) The Syrians have diverged considerably from their original demand for water rights in the Jordan and in practice are demanding to be a riparian state. (4) Syrian extremism is actually intensifying and there has been no improvement in their position.

Notes

1. Sent also to the missions in London, Paris, and Rome.
2. See No. 124.
3. In a meeting with Vigier on 19 March, Gaon presented Israel's answer as follows: (1) Israel stands by the principles it voiced during the various discussions. (2) Israel favors continuation of the talks and is prepared to participate in them. (3) Israel is willing to discuss each practical issue in its own right, according to its significance. (See Gaon to the Foreign Ministry, 22 March 1953, 130.02/2434/3.)

   Even before the Israeli response was received, the Syrians announced that they could not meet before 29 March. The Foreign Ministry evaluation was that the postponement was due to the Arab League conference scheduled for 28 March and not to the positions Israel had presented in the latest round of talks with the Syrians. (See Eytan's telegram to the Israel Embassy in Washington, 22 March 1953, 130.09/2309/12.)
4. See No. 95.
5. See No. 44.
6. For further details on the talk, see Harkabi to the Chief of the General Staff, 18 March 1953, 130.02/2434/3.

137. Sir Francis Evans to M. Sharett. 18 March 1953

Notes

1. The letter was delivered to Eytan by the British ambassador in Tel Aviv on 19 March

1953. Eytan responded that although Israel understood that the British government might consider it premature to raise the subject of the Suez Canal blockade in the Security Council, it was concerned that Britain and Egypt would reach an accord with no resolution of the blockade question. The ambassador reiterated Eden's promise to Sharett that any settlement with Egypt would take Israel's interests in the Suez Canal into account. (See Eytan to the British Commonwealth Division, 20 March 1953, 130.13/2595/8.) See the letter on the same subject from the U.S. Secretary of State to the Israel ambassador in Washington, 20 March 1953, 130.02/2418/20. On the contacts between the two countries that preceded the transmission of the letters, see *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1150–51.

2. See Vol. 7, No. 505 and n. 1 there.
3. See No. 35.
4. In File 130.13/2599/3.

138. M. Fischer to E. Najar. 19 March 1953

Notes

1. The reference is to: (a) the peace agreement between the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States, Great Britain, and France, intended to regulate relations between them until the signing of a final peace treaty; (b) the agreement between the Federal Republic and five Western European states for the establishment of a European Defence Community. Both were concluded in May 1952. The agreements were ratified by the U.S. Congress and British Parliament in early August, 1953, and by the Bundestag in May of that year. The French cabinet decided at the end of January 1953 to submit a bill for the ratification of the two agreements to the National Assembly, but it was not until August 1954 that the National Assembly debated and rejected the proposal to ratify establishment of a European Defence Community.
2. See No. 152.

139. United States Division to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 20 March 1953

Notes

1. In connection with the Yarmuk Project for irrigating land in the Jordan Valley to permit the settlement in Jordan of about 100,000 refugees. (See Bendor's report on the meeting, 3 April 1953, 93.08/357/43; see also *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1148–49.)
2. At their meeting on 29 July 1952, Sharett suggested to Fryer that an Israeli engineer and a representative of the Israel Electric Corporation meet with engineers of the Technical Cooperation Administration to discuss the Yarmuk Plan, which had been aired during the same talk. See Vol. 7, Nos. 264 and 471.

140. Editorial Note

Ratification of the Reparations Agreement with Germany

On 18 March 1953, the reparations agreement was ratified by the Bundestag, and on 20 March by the Bundesrat. That same day, the president of the German Federal Republic signed the law ratifying the reparations agreement. After the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee decided on 19 March to recommend ratification, the Government of Israel ratified the agreement on 22 March, by a vote of 6–1. It came into effect on 27 March with an exchange of the documents of ratification at the UN Secretariat. (For the text of the Government decision, see File 43/5567/4069.)

141. Ch. Yahil (Cologne) to M. Sharett. 22 March 1953

Orig.: 130.02/2417/7

Yahil sets down his thoughts concerning ratification of the reparations agreement between Israel and Germany. He recalls German hesitations about ratifying the agreement and notes those Germans who proved instrumental in achieving it, despite all the obstacles: (1) Adenauer's obdurate will; (2) the indefatigable devotion of a small group of friends in the inner circles of the government; (3) the clear stand of the Social Democrats and their efforts, which took no heed of tactical considerations and stood firm on basic principles; (4) the public activity by Israel's friends, who had conducted propaganda and information campaigns throughout Germany.

Ratification of the agreement was not accompanied by great fanfare, however. Even those who had helped were weary from the effort and not prepared to wage a public campaign on behalf of the agreement; they preferred that ratification be accomplished discreetly. Yahil believes that the waves of enthusiasm for the reparations agreement have subsided. There remains only a handful who could serve as the cornerstone for different relations with Germany. Among these he lists, first and foremost, the German labor movement, followed by both Protestant and Catholic church circles. Relations with these circles must be fostered to ensure that the reparations agreement is implemented properly and also to create a new dynamic in the relations between the two countries. Yahil proposes that Israel be guided by political realism and develop a network of relations with Germany, which is on its way to becoming the most important country in Europe. Israel cannot play the role of "debt collector" forever; it must nurture German good will. Political action is required to prove that Israel is a worthy partner, including the following: (1) Israel should state

clearly that it is part of the Western Free World and willing to participate in its defense. (2) Every opportunity must be taken to prove that Israel is the vanguard of the Jewish people, who support it *en bloc*. (3) Israel's value as a bridge to Asia must be emphasized. Improving its relations with Asian countries would enhance Israel's value for the Germans. (4) Israel must understand that in the long term it cannot maintain good relations with Germany without normal diplomatic ties. Even if Germany's leaders are showing forbearance, the German public is not so tolerant and will soon be clamoring for a change in the nature of relations. He proposes taking the first step in this direction already in the coming months and making sure that the initiative come from Israel. (5) Actions likely to bring about a rapprochement, whether in the economic or public sphere, should be encouraged.

Yahil is aware that he is proposing a sharp turn in Israel's policy towards Germany, one that would not be easily accepted in Israel. He believes, however, that public opinion must be made ready for such a change. He argues that this is a historic opportunity; were Israel to hesitate it might lose those who are sincerely intent on trying to make amends for Germany's crimes against the Jews.

Notes

1. See Yahil to Eytan, 22 March 1953, 130.02/2417/7; see also No. 140 (Editorial Note).
2. See No. 100 (Editorial Note) and No. 101.

142. A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram). 24 March 1953

143. E. Elath to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram). 24 March 1953

Notes

1. Dulles visited the Middle East in May 1953. See No. 206 (Editorial Note).
2. See No. 110.

144. E. Sasson (Rome) to M. Sharett. 24 March 1953

Coded Tel.: MPR345; Inc.: 130.02/2455/1

Sasson is commenting on Eban's plan and the ongoing exchange between

Eban and Elath:[1] (1) Eban's scheme does not contain much that is new. Its advantage lies in that it concentrates everything done so far in the Foreign Ministry into a single coherent plan that would prove to the U.S. Administration that Israel is a realistic and constructive country concerned, in these days of international crisis, for the security of the Middle East. It would also remind the United States that Israel is an essential element in the region, without which it would be difficult to organize regional defense. (2) On the other hand, Sasson finds a major flaw in the scheme, inasmuch as it is based on achieving peace between Israel and Egypt and assigns this highest priority as the first stage in any discussion or settlement between the West and Egypt. As a result, it is liable to raise Egypt's price, open the door for pressure on Israel to make territorial concessions, and arouse opposition from the British, who have stated that they do not wish to link peace with Israel to their conflict with Egypt. (3) Eban's plan is further deficient in that it assumes that Egypt can be compelled to make peace with Israel and ignores the fact that conditions in the Arab world are not yet ripe for peace with Israel. Even should Egypt's leaders wish to make peace with Israel they could not do so; they would not be able to muster domestic support as long as they could not point to a victory on the Suez Canal issue. According top priority to achieving peace invites an Egyptian rejection, after which the Americans, too, would despair of peace. (4) Eban's scheme totally overlooks Turkey and France, who are also among the initiators of the Middle East Defense Organization. (5) In Sasson's opinion, at this juncture Israel must focus on two objectives: (a) ensuring that any discussion and agreement between the West and Egypt on the future of the Suez Canal not bypass the issue of the Egyptian blockade and provide a satisfactory solution to that problem; (b) inducing the United States and Britain to negotiate with Israel on Middle East defense. If Israel can achieve these two goals it would enhance its position vis-à-vis the Arabs, improve its economic condition, avoid any threat of isolation, and even bring the United States and Britain to realize that Israel's continual insistence on the need for peace reflects not merely an Israeli but also a Western interest as well, whose price Israel should have to pay alone.

Note

1. See No. 33 and No. 109 and n. 6 there. See also Nos. 119, 121, and 126; No. 131 and n. 3 there; and No. 134.

145. Editorial Note

Extraordinary Meeting of Israeli and Jordanian Representatives, 25 March 1953

On 25 March, Israeli and Jordanian representatives met for the third time to discuss ways to prevent infiltration (see No. 127 and n. 2 there). The Israeli representative delivered the memorandum printed below to his Jordanian counterpart. The Jordanian representative promised to pass it on to his government and to relay the government's reply to Israel. (For a report on the meeting, see Gaon to the Foreign Ministry, 26 March 1953, 130.02/2429/4.)

146. *Aide-Mémoire* from the Government of Israel to the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. 25 March 1953

Notes

1. This paragraph was erroneously designated (4) in the original.
2. Cf. No. 112, n. 2.

147. M. Keren (London) to W. Eytan. 26 March 1953

Copy: 130.02/2406/16

Keren responds to Eytan's letter[1] in which the latter reacted to his suggestion that the British be approached with a proposal that forces evacuated from the Suez Canal Zone be transferred to the Gaza Strip. Keren rejects Eytan's argument that his ideas are "too revolutionary to be acceptable to public opinion" in Israel. He believes that Israeli public opinion has advanced further than the Government realizes—perhaps even further than the Government itself. A public that became accustomed in a matter of months to the idea of reparations and calmly accepted the idea of German ships docking in Israeli ports is more flexible and realistic than the Government believes. What is important, in Keren's opinion, is not the details of his proposal, but the premise on which it is based: namely, that it is impossible to maintain a policy founded entirely on demands and requests from others. Israel must put forward proposals of its own that can be interesting and of value to the Western Powers, instead of always making demands and being a nuisance. The only thing that Israel has to offer is territory in the Negev and this is the starting point for his plan.

Keren assumes that Israeli diplomacy will be unable to prevent the anticipated agreement on the Suez Canal or the establishment of a Middle East defense organization. Hence it is faced with two alternatives: remaining on the sidelines and attempting to protect itself against the dangers inherent in such developments, by means of separate accords; or trying to integrate into Western plans for the region. To some extent Israel has already adopted the first option. Keren believes that this strategy has failed to rescue Israel from isolation; on the contrary, it has intensified it, because the Western powers know that they can reach a separate agreement with Israel whenever they wish and do not have to take Israel's security needs into account when reaching an agreement with the Arabs. He believes that the second option—integration—is preferable. Eban holds that this can be accomplished through a massive peace offensive, whereas military leaders believe that the solution lies in the proposals they submitted to the British mission that had visited Israel.[2]

Keren does not accept Eban's view that there are real prospects at present of linking the idea of peace with the Suez problem and plans for a regional defense organization. Eban chalked up a major accomplishment when he persuaded his interlocutors in Washington that regional peace is preferable to a piecemeal solution, but the British and Arabs are not party to this idea. Keren does not reject Eban's scheme as a tactical measure or as a move in Israel's cold war with the Arabs, but it is not the neatest or most comprehensive answer to Israel's problems. As for the army's proposals, the fact that Israel has not yet received a response from the British indicates that they did not find them attractive.

Keren is convinced that a new strategy is required. The method adopted thus far by Israel has not proved successful and has merely caused the Powers to view Israel as a negligible and annoying factor, to which undue attention need not be paid. Only if Israel can enhance its importance, by presenting a proposal that interests the Powers, can it become a factor to be reckoned with. His proposal concerning the Gaza Strip is one possibility, but there may be others. He is also convinced that the time is ripe for action, since if a solution that does not involve Israel is found it will be left out of the game and will have no choice but to accept whatever the Powers are willing to grant.[3]

Notes

1. Eytan was responding to Keren's memorandum entitled "Israel and the Gaza Strip Plan." The memorandum, written in late February 1953 (130.02/2401/16), was sent to Elath and passed on to senior Foreign Ministry officials. Keren proposed that Israel encourage the British government to transfer forces evacuated from the Suez Canal Zone to the Gaza Strip and express its willingness to adopt measures that

would facilitate such a transfer, on condition that such steps did not jeopardize Israel's sovereignty. Keren backed up his proposal with an analysis of Israel's political status and the advantages that would accrue from such a plan.

Eytan doubted that the plan would be accepted by Israeli public opinion and found it hard to believe that it would meet Britain's military needs (Eytan to Elath, 16 March 1953, ibid.). For further details about the plan, see Keren to Elath, 13 March 1953, ibid.

2. See No. 100 (Editorial Note) and No. 101.
3. See Vol. 7, Nos. 379 and 385.
4. Among those who responded to the memorandum were Abba Eban and Katriel Salmon; both rejected the plan as militarily impractical. (See Salmon to Elath, 12 March 1953; Eban to Elath, 2 April 1953, 130.02/2401/16.) Ben-Gurion took a severe view of the memorandum, passed on to him by the Chief of the General Staff. He instructed Sharett to find out to whom the memorandum had been sent and asked scathingly: "Since when is it the business of the ambassador in London to circulate memoranda of this kind?! Was it done with the Foreign Ministry's concurrence, or according to Foreign Ministry procedures? If the Ministry was not in the know and the circulation of the memorandum was not in accordance with standard practice, does it intend to take steps to ensure that such a thing does not recur?" (Ben-Gurion to Sharett, 29 March 1953, IDF Archives, 230.72/892).

148. A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram). 27 March 1953

Notes

1. See the document by Abba Eban, "Notes on an Egyptian-Israel Peace Settlement," dated 18 March 1953. Eban analyzed the elements on which peace between Israel and Egypt might be based and presented his opinion on other current regional issues. (The document and accompanying letter, dated 17 March 1953, are in File 93.08/355/28.)
2. See No. 135.

149. Consultation between the Foreign Minister, the Prime Minister, and the Chief of Staff (the Prime Minister's residence, 27 March 1953)

Protocol: 130.02/2449/1

Sharett wanted to discuss three interrelated matters: How Israel should act regarding the possible British evacuation of the Canal Zone, what line to take regarding peace, and what line to take regarding regional defense. Sharett said that Israel's vigorous pressure on the Arabs concerning peace

increases their inclination to haggle and augments their stubbornness. Regarding regional defense, he said that Israel should be careful not to overuse the argument that regional defense requires peace; such an argument invites pressure on Israel regarding the terms of peace and the concessions it is willing to make to attain it. Sharett believes that it is none of Israel's concern to accelerate the establishment of a defense organization, for three reasons: the discussions about setting up the organization are liable to produce pressure on Israel to facilitate a peace accord; the Arabs will receive weapons if a defense organization is set up; the organization will give primacy to Egypt, something in which Israel has no interest.

Sharett believes that the starting point must be the question of the Suez Canal. The Americans and British must be told that British evacuation of the Canal Zone raises the question of free passage. The Egyptians are not complying with the Security Council resolution today, when there are still British bases in the Canal Zone. There is a danger that the Egyptians will behave like bandits when the bases are evacuated. Hence Israel has in interest in demanding that British evacuation of the Canal Zone be made conditional on abrogation of the blockade against Israel. Sharett proposes transferring the discussion about the Canal from the track of Israeli interests to that of international interests and to emphasize that Egypt has not been complying with Security Council resolutions.

When it comes to evacuation of the bases in the Canal Zone, Sharett explains that the line to be taken is that the real import of the move is not the British withdrawal from the Canal, but the change from one form of defense—presence on the spot—to another—planning operations to be implemented in wartime. Israel has a contribution to make to such a plan. To avoid having to decline a British request for bases in Israel, Israel could argue that the concept of bases is antiquated; in the modern age, when entire divisions can be airlifted, the need is no longer for permanent bases, but for planning, to which Israel can contribute. Sharett recommends approaching both the Americans and the British on all matters connected with the evacuation of the Canal Zone.

The Chief of Staff reported that, according to information available to Israel, the British radar station in the Canal Zone can pick up half of the State of Israel, including all its airfields except for Mahane David. The radar station will be left in the hands of the Egyptian army if the British evacuate the Canal Zone.

Ben-Gurion said that there had been no positive results to the negotiations with the British delegation. There was an exchange of letters, but in his opinion Eden had simply deceived Israel. The British must be told that any weapons given to the Arabs would be used in a war against Israel.

Regarding the Canal, the member states of the Security Council should be asked to see to it that Egypt comply with the 1951 Security Council resolution on free passage through the Canal. On the subject of peace, Ben-

Gurion said that there was no need to create the impression that the Americans are doing us a favor when they press the Arabs to make peace. They must be told that there can be no regional defense without peace, because the Arabs will not defend the region; but this must not be done is a fashion that leads them to pressure Israel. Ben-Gurion emphasized that on three matters Israel will not concede: Jerusalem, the Negev, and the Galilee.

Ben-Gurion did not agree with Sharett that regional defense should be linked with evacuation of the Canal Zone. He believed that Israel had no standing on the Canal question. It must explain to the British that with regard to regional defense in wartime they must turn to Israel and strengthen it militarily—but with no connection to the evacuation of the Canal Zone.

Sharett argued that the balance of forces in the Canal Zone will alter to Israel's detriment after the British evacuate their bases there. To this Ben-Gurion responded that he does not see how Israel can modify this given.

Sharett presented his skepticism about Eban's proposal to submit a plan for peace with Egypt to the Americans as a way to persuade them of the sincerity of Israel's intentions and give them something concrete to relate to in their talks with the Egyptians. Sharett feared that any plan submitted by Israel would immediately become a minimum and lead to pressure for further concessions. He believed that if Israel has something to offer, it must hold on to its cards until the actual negotiations.

Ben-Gurion, too, said that he does not understand Eban. It is his feeling that Eban does not live the situation in Israel and is influenced by the fact that he is in Washington. He believes that any discussion of peace must focus on the need for peace in the entire world and emphasize that Israel should not have to pay for a peace that the Arabs, too, require. Israel's contribution to peace is peace itself, and peace is something that the whole world needs.

Sharett repeated his argument that evacuation of the Canal now is a revolutionary turning point in the modern history of the Middle East. It is inconceivable that Israeli policy should ignore it.

Ben-Gurion agreed that Israel should demand removal of the blockade but saw no way to link the topic with the evacuation of the Canal Zone. He again said that he relates with suspicion to Eden's government and negotiations with it.

Sharett replied that an approach to the British could do no harm and should be made now. No decision was forthcoming.

Notes

1. Michael Comay was also present at the meeting.
2. See No. 115.

3. On 23 March, President Eisenhower met with a delegation of Zionist leaders, headed by Louis Lipsky, chairman of the American Zionist Council. In a statement to the press, approved by the president's staff, Lipsky said that Eisenhower had declared that the U.S. government would use its influence to bring about peace between Israel and the Arab states.
4. See Vol. 6, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, p. 275.
5. See Vol. 7, No. 379.

150. Editorial Note

Ben-Gurion's Comments at the Meeting of the Mapai Political Bureau, 28 March 1953

On Saturday, 28 March 1953, the Mapai political bureau held a debate on political issues. Sharett opened it with a comprehensive review of the political situation, focusing on three issues: relations with the United States following the changeover in the White House; severance of ties with the Soviet Union; and the effect on Israel-Arab relations of the Powers' re-thinking of their relations with the Arab countries.

After Sharett spoke, Ben-Gurion rose and presented the 13 assumptions summarized below:

(1) Neutrality was out of the question in the case of a world war. First of all, no party would honor such neutrality. Second, a Russian victory would mean the end of the Jewish people. Third, even a temporary Soviet occupation of the Middle East would put an end to the Jewish state, because the refugees would return immediately and the Jews might even be expelled. Whatever the final outcome of such a war, Israel would not survive it.

(2) In the event of war, others would need Israel almost as much as it needs them. In a world war, neither the U.S., Britain, nor any other country would be able to maintain a quarter of a million soldiers in the Middle East. They would have to rely on Israel's industrial and technical potential.

(3) There was a great disparity between Israel's political value and its military value; the same holds true, in the opposite direction, with regard to the Arabs. The Arabs' military potential was almost nil, but their political value enormous. Israel's military value in the region is decisive, but its political value negligible.

(4) Military value was significant in wartime. In the absence of war, those who think in political rather than military terms cannot fail to be aware of the significance of the Arab countries. They cover an enormous territory and many nations and have many allies in the world.

(5) Hence the power of the Arabs in any prewar period was substantial.

Only a serious threat of war can make Israel indispensable to America.

(6) If the Americans considered this threat seriously, they would realize that Israel required immediate military assistance, both in wartime and many years beforehand, because it must also fear war by the Arabs.

(7) Military aid to the Arabs posed a threat to Israel, because it would be used against it, even in the case of a world war.

(8) Britain could not be a decisive factor in the Middle East, neither in peacetime nor in wartime. The Churchill era was drawing to a close. In the Middle East, Israel's power was more important than Britain's. If the British sought cooperation with Israel, it must be on the basis of equality and reciprocity. For the present, they were pursuing a Middle East policy hostile to Israel. Eden was continuing Bevin's policy.

(9) The Tripartite Declaration had no value as a triune statement; it was a purely American declaration. Britain and France had fundamental clashes of interest regarding both the Arabs and Israel. France was Israel's natural ally and had an interest in enhancing its military strength. Britain would be hostile as long as it entertained the illusion that it could win Arab sympathy.

(10) Vis-à-vis the United States, Israel had two levers: (a) Its military significance. The IDF was the most important factor in obtaining assistance from other countries. Aid was being received from the U.S. and, to some extent from France, only thanks to the IDF. The American grant-in-aid was the result of American Jewish pressure, but was granted also thanks to the IDF. Hence the IDF was the most important fiscal and economic factor in the country, not only a factor in Israel's military security. (b) The importance of American Jewry varied from period to period. Today, it was more important in relation to Congress than to the president. Israel's military importance and the role of American Jewry were the two levers of its financial and economic policy. The army actually brought money into the nation's coffers; a weak army would wreak havoc with Israel's budget as long as the country required foreign assistance—and that would be for a long time to come.

(11) Peace with the Arabs was the supreme goal of Israel's foreign policy. However, needing peace did not bring it automatically. At present it was not vital for the Arabs. But the Arabs must know before they entered any discussions (and this must be made clear to the Americans as well) that Israel would not discuss three subjects: (a) there would be no cession of territory; (b) there would be no internationalization of Jerusalem; and (c) there would be no return of refugees. Had the Arabs accepted the 1947 UN resolution establishing a Jewish state, history would have been different, and so would the State of Israel. But they rejected it; the clock could not be turned back by

peace, negotiations, and American pressure, but only by military force that could defeat the IDF.

(12) Providing bases to Israel's friends would not prejudice its sovereignty. Britain was saved by providing bases to the United States, and lost nothing. There could be no question of granting bases to Britain, because it would not defend Israel and did not have the power to do so. As for America, it must understand that the bases it would require in the event of a world war were the State of Israel and its own military might, not a piece of land for stationing troops. Hence America should help Israel enhance its industrial and military potential by building airfields and roads, providing equipment and armaments, and so on.

(13) Israel had no interest in a regional settlement in the context of a world war. It did have an interest in a settlement with the Arab countries as its neighbors. With regard to a world war, Israel was interested only in an accord with America and, if possible, with all of America's allies. But this had no bearing on America's dealings with others in the Middle East. The Arab countries would not fight in a world war, because they had no interest in doing so. Israel had a reason to fight. Hence the United States must give Israel what it needed because Israel would help it in a world war. *(The document is in the Labour Party archives.)*

151. A. Biran (Jerusalem) to W. Eytan. 29 March 1953

Orig.: 130.02/2410/9

Biran reports on a talk with Nashashibi. Nashashibi told Biran that since Israel has begun selling the refugees' property, there is no chance that even one Arab will be willing to make peace. Biran replied that in any case Nashashibi argues that peace with Israel is not practicable. Israel had no choice but to find a solution to the problem of abandoned Arab property. Nashashibi admitted that even without the property issue he does not see even a glimmer of hope for peace; nor did he evince much enthusiasm for the actions of the new Administration in the United States. It has not presented any peace program and has not even reprimanded Israel. Nashashibi pins great hopes on Dulles's anticipated visit.

He went on to say that the policy of the Arab countries is strongly influenced by the Palestine problem, in part because every government ministry throughout the Middle East includes Palestinian officials who fan the flames of extremism and dissatisfaction. For the first time he admitted that many Arab claims are in the nature of propaganda. Those who diffuse them have been swept away in the stream of their own rhetoric and are no

longer able to extricate themselves. Nashashibi told Biran that Jordan has decided to grant loans for small industry, construction, and tourism. Procedures at the border crossing in Jerusalem will be eased.

Biran notes that Nashashibi was less aggressive than on previous occasions, apparently because of the adverse reaction by the Jordanian government after he submitted his ultimatum to the UN over the incident at the Arab college in Jerusalem,[2] without prior approval from his government.

Notes

1. On 24 February 1953, an agreement was signed between the Custodian of Absentee Property and the Development Authority, in which the former undertook to register in the name of the latter about two million dunams of the land it held in the Land Registry, by the end of 1954. On 10 March, the Knesset passed the Lands Purchase Act, intended to provide a legal basis for the purchase of lands, chiefly absentee property, earmarked for security needs or vital development purposes, and to grant compensation rights to their owners.
2. See No. 77.
3. See No. 68 (Editorial Note) and No. 69.

152. A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram). 30 March 1953

Note

1. See No. 138.

153. Memorandum by M. Amir (The Hague). 2 April 1953

Orig.: 130.01/2457/10

Amir comments on Israel's attitude towards Germany after ratification of the reparations agreement. He notes the complexity of the problem and public sentiment in Israel, but believes that the country must face up to reality and avoid an ostrich-like policy. Israel must realize that Germany has acquired pre-eminence in Europe and plays a vital function in all Western defense plans. Israel cannot continue its policy of perpetual harassment at all international forums and deny Germany the right to participate in them. It must not be forgotten that ratification of the agreement is only one stage in the actual reparations. Israel should not display servility to Germany and the establishment of diplomatic relations at this stage is also

inconceivable. He does suggest, however, a re-evaluation of the Israel-German relationship, freed of the tortured past, and a new policy towards Germany. He proposes acting with courtesy in the international arena and refraining from actions that make it difficult for Germany to fulfill its obligations. Amir confesses that he, too, finds its difficult to escape the burden of the past; but he believes that the policy he proposes is essential, though it may be unpopular. A change in policy is important for additional reasons: (1) Implementation of the reparations agreement will inevitably involve negotiations with Germany, and these ought to be conducted with official sanction. (2) Germany might be able to play an important role in establishing peace between Israel and its neighbors. In conclusion, Amir writes that he suggests understanding rather than forgetting.

Note

1. See Vol. 7, No. 332. See also No. 141.

154. Editorial Note

Soviet Government Communiqué concerning the Release of the Jewish Doctors, 4 April 1953

On 4 April, the Soviet government published a communiqué concerning the release of the doctors, as follows.

> The Ministry of the Interior of the Soviet Union has conducted a thorough investigation of the material of the preliminary investigation and other data concerning the group of doctors who were accused of sabotage, espionage, and other activities against the leaders of the Soviet state.
>
> As a result of this investigation, it has been determined that Prof. M. S. Vovsi, Prof. N. V. Vinogradov, Prof. M. M. Cogan, Prof. B. B. Cogan, Prof. P. A. Yagurov, Prof. A. A. Feldman, Prof. Y. G. Ettinger, Prof. V. K. Vasilensko, Prof. A. M. Greenstein, Prof. I. F. Zelenin, Prof. B. S. Preobrazhensky, Prof. G. A. Popova, Prof. V. Zakosov, Prof. N. A. Shareshevsky, and Dr. G. A. Mayorov, who were involved in this affair, were apprehended by the former Ministry of State Security without any legal basis.
>
> The investigation disclosed that the accusations against the aforementioned individuals were groundless and that the documentary data on which the investigators based their accusations were fabricated. It was determined that the testimonies of the prisoners, which ostensibly confirmed the accusations against them, were obtained by personnel of the interrogations branch of the former Ministry of State Security through

the use of methods of interrogation that are totally unacceptable and absolutely prohibited by Soviet law.

On the basis of the conclusions of the special inquiry committee appointed by the Soviet Ministry of the Interior, the doctors who were arrested [. . .]* and others involved in this affair have been cleared of all suspicions of sabotage, terrorist activity, and espionage imputed to them, and in accordance with Article 4, Paragraph 5 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, have been released from detention.

(translated from the Hebrew translation of the communiqué, which is in File 130.02/2381/10)

155. Eastern Europe Division (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Delegation to the United Nations (New York). 4 April 1953

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2330/4

In reply to Levavi's telegram,[1] his colleagues offer the following clarifications: (1) Since Stalin's death the Czech daily *Rude Pravo* has published articles critical of Israel and Zionism, but there have been no attacks in other countries of Eastern Europe. (2) There have not been any talks on emigration to Israel from Eastern Europe, but in unofficial meetings there has been a change for the better in the attitude towards Israel's representatives. (3) Emigration to Israel from Poland and Bulgaria is continuing. (4) No negative intervention on the part of the Soviets has been felt; the issue of Russian property in Israel is being dealt with as planned. (5) There has been no deterioration in the condition of the Jews in Eastern Europe, but neither have there been any encouraging signs: a number of Zionists have been arrested in Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and three local functionaries in Bucharest.

Notes

1. Levavi, who was leaving for New York, asked his colleagues in the Eastern Europe Division to clarify the following: (1) Are the legations in Eastern Europe reporting additional propaganda offensives against Zionism and Israel? (2) Have any discussions taken place in East European capitals concerning *aliya* or the resumption of relations, and if so, what was their purport? (3) Is *aliya* continuing from Bulgaria and Poland? (4) Have the Soviets manifested any interest in Israeli affairs and in Russian assets in Israel? (5) "Have left-wing circles in Israel and Europe dropped any hints?"

*The repeated list of names has been omitted here.

(6) Is there any information on the situation of the Jews in Eastern Europe? (1 April 1953, 130.09/2330/19).

2. The reference is to the Russian church complex in Abu Kabir (Jaffa), which the Bulgarian legation had just rented. (For correspondence on the subject of Russian property in Israel, see Files 130.11/2501/18 and 20.)
3. See No. 154 (Editorial Note).

156. Editorial Note

Response by the Government of Israel to the Release of the Jewish Doctors in the Soviet Union, 4 April 1953

On 4 April, the Government of Israel published its response to the announcement in Moscow of the release of the Jewish doctors (see No. 154). The Israeli communiqué read as follows:

> The Government of Israel has learned with great satisfaction of the official communiqué published in Moscow to the effect that the accusations against the Jewish doctors have been proven false and that the doctors' ostensible "confessions" of their guilt were obtained by illegitimate means. In practice this fully confirms the position on this matter presented by the Government of Israel in the Knesset on 19 January 1953.
>
> In connection with the doctors, false charges were leveled against international Jewish organizations, such as the Joint Distribution Committee and the World Zionist Organization. The accusations against the doctors served as a pretext for an anti-Jewish campaign, one of whose steps was the severance of ties with the State of Israel.
>
> The Government of Israel hopes that this travesty of justice will be remedied in full by an end to this anti-Jewish campaign. It will welcome the resumption of normal relations between the Soviet Union and the State of Israel (130.02/2410/18).

157. Eastern Europe Division to the Israel Missions in Eastern Europe (telegram). 5 April 1953

Notes

1. See No. 156 (Editorial Note).
2. The first secretary at the Israeli legation in Sofia, B. Razin, had indeed reported a changed atmosphere at a similar reception hosted by the Hungarian legation in the Bulgarian capital on 4 April: the Soviet ambassador shook his hand, mentioned the exoneration of the Jewish doctors, and spoke cordially with him. The other East European representatives also related to him warmly and chatted with him on vari-

ous neutral topics. (See Razin to Bentsur, 10 April 1953, 130.11/2507/9.) See also No. 156.

158. A. Eban's and M. Sharett's Addresses at the Meeting of the Israel Embassy Staff in Washington. 7 April 1953[1]

130.02/2479/11

Eban reported on the Embassy's redoubled activity in the recent period. There had been fears that the new Administration would prefer the Arabs' friendship, but this apprehension has proved false, because Israel's relations with the United States rest on two firm foundations: Israel's location, and the sympathy of U.S. public opinion towards Israel. Eban reported on his meeting with Bedell Smith[3] and added that the Embassy staff had found a friendly reception in the highest ranks of the Administration for the Israel's assumption that peace must precede the establishment of a regional defense organization. Both the president and his advisors accept that it is impossible to move towards a Middle East defense setup without establishing peace in the region.

Eban said that the Embassy staff believe that Israel has only a short respite during which it can put across its position on peace, since it can be assumed that the United States or the UN will wake up on their own and start dealing with this matter; it is preferable that Israel be the party that takes the initiative. In addition, an Israeli initiative would cause political embarrassment to the Arab side, which would be depicted as trying to avoid peace. International experience demonstrates that a peace initiative is its own reward; those who evade it lose out.

He added that they still have not talked with the Americans about the details of peace. In his opinion, such discussions should be held despite the danger latent in such a discussion, during which the Americans are apt to suggest concessions that Israel will have to agree to consider. In Eban's opinion, Israel's political experience demonstrates that discussions of this sort have never harmed it. The choice, as he sees it, is not between the status quo and an Israeli initiative, but between a peace designed by Israel and a peace designed by a hostile party. The State Department would be interested in receiving proposals from both sides.

The most desirable situation for Israel is that the Americans submit their own peace plan based on Israeli ideas. Evidently, both Bedell Smith and Lodge are close to the Israeli position and correctly assess its leeway for concessions.

In the first part of his remarks, Sharett analyzed the significance of the changes that have occurred in the wake of the U.S. elections. He said that some of the modifications in the U.S. approach are not a result of the

changing of the guard. There is simply more attention to and absorption of Arab propaganda. Public mechanisms have been set up through which this propaganda can be channeled.

The refugee problem is the type of weapon that becomes sharper as time passes. It is exploited to attack Israel. Just as the problem of displaced persons after the Second World War gnawed the progressive conscience of the United States, so the very existence of refugee camps works against Israel.

Broader circles in the United States are discovering the Arab world; the Arabs, too, are becoming more aware of the American perspective.

A certain fatigue is apparent in the American Jewish community, which no longer feels that it bears the same responsibility for the State of Israel as during the struggle before the establishment of the state and during the War of Independence.

Sharett said that the key factor in activity in the United States in the previous period was the Zionist leadership, whereas now the Embassy is showing itself to be an effective and active instrument. The factors that worked on Israel's behalf in the past were based on confidence in the justness of its cause. Now, however, Israel finds itself in constant competition with the Arabs, and victory is not assured.

The Arabs have advantages of manpower and geopolitical location (the Suez Canal, oil reserves), with which Israel can scarcely compete.

The Embassy and Foreign Ministry may by no means rely on the present strength of Israel, but must work diligently to enlist public reinforcements for the Israeli cause. This job is even more important following the accession of the new American administration.

As things appear from Israel, Sharett said, the new Administration does not believes that it owes its victory to Jewish support. This is cause for concern, on the one hand, but it is also perhaps an advantage: there is a school that holds that because the previous Administration had been "bought" by the Jews it could not accomplish a great deal in the Middle East. But since the new Administration does not suffer from this "stain," it can operate with greater freedom. On the other hand, there is apprehension that the new Administration may be more attentive to the Arabs because it has no link to Jewish support.

The Arabs applauded Eisenhower's victory and entertained great hopes. Forces hostile to Israel in the State Department raised their head. Now, though, there has been a certain sobering up. The Embassy demonstrated a high measure of alertness and ability in averting these perils.

Sharett turned to the political issues on the agenda.

He said that peace is the chief objective of Israeli foreign policy; the United States must be enlisted towards the attaining of this goal. The way to do so is to exploit the most important issue for it, which is defense; but it is possible to overdo it. Sharett is not certain that Israel's campaign for peace truly advances it towards peace. The world is liable to get the

impression that peace is beyond its grasp. A need may be felt to re-evaluate the entire Middle East problem and that "troublemaker" Israel. Sharett does not conclude that peace propaganda should be halted; but there is logic to lulls in it, so that it not become old hat. From time to time, it should be noted that Israel should not be blamed if peace still hasn't arrived.

Unlike Eban, Sharett does not believe that the United States has assigned top priority to peace and only then to defense. Sharett believes that Israel will first have to advance in the area of defense; this progress will move it towards peace. He proposed an integrated approach: without easing up on the theme of peace in Israel's public information campaigns, in its talks with Americans it should not reject the idea that a regional defense accord would promote peace. He added that Israel, too, seeks military assistance and preparations for defense without conditioning fulfillment of its demands on peace. An exclusive emphasis on peace is liable to boomerang on Israel; those regional-defense steps that benefit Israel must not be rejected.

Sharett presented a number of reasons why Israel must restrain itself: (1) The demand that the Arabs not receive weapons contradicts the exigencies of regional defense. The fact that the Arabs ignore this point is no license for Israel to get too entangled in this point. (2) Israel must not become entrapped by the delusion that peace depends on American pressure on the Arabs. The elements of the Arab hostility to Israel are so deeply rooted that American pressure cannot change them. It may be assumed that the Americans themselves, too, will be cautious about going too far in pressuring the Arabs, in order not to irk them excessively. What is more, the Arabs' bargaining power would probably be augmented should the Americans decide to work towards peace at all costs. (3) Israel is liable to trigger American pressure against itself, because the Americans are apt to press the Arabs regarding peace and Israel regarding its terms. There is a trend of thought in the White House that it is Israel that should make concessions for peace. For this reason, it is better not to press too hard for peace and thereby invite outside intervention.

As to the details of the Israeli position, Sharett made it clear that the major problems are borders, refugees, and Jerusalem. With these fundamental problems, the Israeli approach is to maintain the status quo: peace between Israel as it is and the Arab states as they are. Israel is not demanding natural frontiers with Jordan, the Gaza Strip, and so on. The Arabs would like to discuss a peace plan before stating their willingness to make peace. Such a procedure is dangerous for Israel because it confronts it with pressure for concessions with no assurance that the negotiations will conclude with peace. Hence it should be explained to the Americans that proposals will only make problems between the sides, not promote peace.

Notes

1. The document is dated 14 April 1953.
2. The list of participants has been omitted. In addition to Eban and Sharett, these were: R. Shiloah, E. Herlitz, Y. Shimoni, G. Rafael, E. Ben-Horin, Y. Giladi, A. Harman, Y. H. Levin, M. Shalit, A. Lewin, Ch. Herzog, P. Eliav, Sh. Kariv, and E. Hayut. The document was written by Eliav. The remarks by the other participants in the discussion have been omitted, as indicated in the body of the document.
3. See No. 74.

159. A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram). 8 April 1953

Notes

1. See No. 167.
2. See No. 130, n. 1.
3. At dinner that evening at Eban's house, Byroade told him with some agitation that the morning's conversation had gone off track. He had no plan, nor was he authorized by his government to propose territorial changes. His sole intention was to sound out the parties' moderation. He regretted Sharett's caustic retort that the Americans could impose border changes on Israel only by armed force; such a harsh statement is not in keeping with the friendly relations between Israel and the United States. Eban replied that he and Sharett had been taken aback when suddenly confronted with a request for territorial changes after endless talks in which such a demand had never been raised. He impressed upon Byroade the sensitivity of a very small country with limited territory and promised that their friendship had not been impaired. Byroade wished to schedule another meeting to clear the air. (See telegram from Eban to the United States Division, W94, 130.09/2310/2.)
4. For another account of the talk, see the summary of Sharett's visit to Washington, 21 April 1953, 130.20/2479/21; Foreign Ministry's weekly survey, 14 April 1953, 130.20/2479/11; cf. *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1164–70. See also No. 172.

160. A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram). 8 April 1953

161. M. Amir to W. Eytan and E. Najar. 10 April 1953

Notes

1. In a telephone conversation on 2 April, Dingemans told Amir that it might be worthwhile to try to bring about a resumption of relations between the Soviet

Union and Israel. He based this remark on his impressions from reports received from Moscow and East European countries. He asked Amir to investigate Israel's attitude to this news before their next meeting. Amir reported the conversation to Sharett when the latter stopped over in the Netherlands on his way to the United States. Sharett told him that, without committing the Ministry, he thought an Israeli initiative out of the question, but a Dutch initiative would be welcomed. Eytan instructed Amir not to "do anything at present" but to wait and see how matters developed (see Amir to Eytan, 3 April 1953, 130.10/2516/2; Eytan to Amir, 10 April 1953, 130.11/2507/2).

2. After consulting with the Prime Minister, Eytan reiterated the above instructions in a telegram dated 16 April (130.09/2303/14).

162. Ch. Herzog to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram). 10 April 1953

Notes

1. The talk took place on 9 April.
2. See Vol. 5, Nos. 509 and 517.

163. M. Sharett (New York) to W. Eytan. 11 April 1953

Copy: 130.02/2414/27

Sharett summarizes his impressions of his visit in Washington and his talks with senior Administration figures. His general impression of the new Administration, in brief, is as follows: (1) inferior intelligence and ability; (2) confused and blundering; (3) willing to clutch at various circumstances as an excuse for deferring planning and decision-making. Sharett believes that although there may be a group of enthusiastic and intelligent men behind the president, it is too early to know what kind of people they are.

In his opinion Eisenhower, like his predecessor, is graced with a simplicity of manner and projects an aura of total ease. On the other hand, he seems to lack the moral weight and rectitude that characterized Truman. In a talk with Eisenhower, Sharett did everything he could to deter the president from adopting a stance on specific issues connected with peace and encouraged him to concentrate on bringing the Arabs, especially Egypt, to negotiate peace. Sharett repeatedly emphasized that the United States must scrupulously avoid appearing to be a party to the conflict by adopting a specific attitude on controversial issues. The United States must remain above the fray and only seek peace, stability, and cooperation. The president agreed, but Sharett is uncertain whether Eisenhower had really pene-

trated to the core of the matter and his agreement reflected a considered opinion and fully formed position. Sharett raised Israel's military needs and tried to explain that it is preferable not to wait until peace is attained or for the establishment of a regional defense organization. The president replied that first all parties must be brought to agreement. If that fails, a different situation would obtain.

In his meeting with Dulles, who gave the impression of being rather confused and still incapable of grasping the complexities of the matter, Sharett again stressed that the United States should not take a stance on controversial issues. The talk with Defense Secretary Wilson and Gen. Bradley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, afforded Sharett an extended opportunity to explain Israel's defense needs, but he does not believe that it contributed to practical results. Wilson's unfamiliarity with the issues provided an opportunity for explaining Israel's needs to him. Yet he too, like others in the Administration, asserted that the first step is for the countries of the region to make peace. Sharett was favorably impressed by Bradley.

Sharett's meeting with Byroade was marked by sharp ups-and-downs. On the positive side was Byroade's admission that Israel has a right of passage through the Suez Canal. He evinced some confusion on the Jerusalem question—no criticism of Israel's decision to transfer the Foreign Ministry and only a lame defense of the American position. Byroade said that the United States could not change its policy on this issue until at least after Dulles's return from his Middle East tour. At the end of the meeting there was open disagreement over the issue of peace.[3]

During his visit Sharett realized that Israel faces several obstacles that could prevent any real progress with regards to military aid. On the other hand, these obstacles could provide Israel with the necessary respite for further efforts to explain its position.

Sharett was especially perturbed by Washington's increasing anxiety about the domestic instability of the Middle East and its susceptibility to Soviet influence and penetration. In his assessment, Moscow's peace offensive might calm the situation. But if U.S. fears are not allayed, Israel could find itself exposed to an American "peace offensive."

Notes

1. The talk took place on 9 April. In addition to Sharett's report, presented below, see also Levin to Zinder, 9 April 1953, 93.08/358/2; the document entitled "Sharett on Military Aid with Eisenhower, Wilson, and Bradley," 9 April 1953, 130.02/2422/8; and Eban to the United States Division, telegram X623, 13 April 1953, 130.09/2330/19.
2. See No. 160.
3. See No. 159.
4. See No. 162.
5. See No. 158.

6. The consultation took place on 10 April. See the summary of the meeting, 14 April 1953, 130.20/2479/11.

7. For further details on Sharett's visit, see also Eliav to the United States Division, 21 April 1953, 130.20/2479/21, and the Foreign Ministry's weekly survey, 14 April 1953, 130.20/2479/11.

8. See Nos. 207 and 211.

9. See also No. 159, n. 3.

164. Y. Harkabi (Tel Aviv) to M. Comay. 4 April 1953

Copy: 130.16/2953/10

Harkabi summarizes the discussions about Israel's position, held in advance of the next round of talks with the Syrians: (1) Israel is not interested in Shishakli's most recent proposal—partitioning the territory while retaining its demilitarized status.[1] (2) Israel should stick to the principle that only Arabs who decide, in the wake of a partition, to move to the Syrian side of the border would receive compensation in land, on a dunam-for-dunam basis. Israel will offer monetary compensation to the other Arabs, at a rate to be determined by negotiations. Vigier's proposal of compensation in land, leaving unspecified who would receive it and at what rate, must be rejected, lest it set a precedent. Compensation in land would apply to the area between Darbashiya and Gonen and include the area from the Syrian border to the marshes, but without Syrian access to the water. (3) Israel's main demand is sovereignty over the waters of the Jordan, Lake Hula, and the Sea of Galilee. Furthermore, it must be stipulated that although the border would run along the eastern bank of the Jordan, Syria would have no water rights other than use of a specified quantity, determined according to current usage data. (4) In the northern demilitarized zone, the border would be determined on the basis of agricultural use. Negotiations should not be broken off because of disagreement concerning territory; some concessions are conceivable. In the central demilitarized zone the border would be as already drawn, including the Dardara area, and proceeding from there along the eastern bank of the Jordan. Along the Hula, the border would be that drawn on the armistice map, in the form of a land-based cartographic line that disregards the location of bodies of water. South of the Hula the border would shift eastward to the new course of the Jordan; the "small triangle" could be conceded. In discussions about the boundary in the southern demilitarized zone, the delegation is authorized to retreat from the position it took at the negotiations on 10 March 1953.[2] Except for the Arabs of Tawafiq, no Arab presence is to be allowed in the lowlands south of the Susita–Ein Gev line. The Arabs of Tawafiq can be granted a kind of enclave, running to the foot of Tel Qazir. (5) Israel would

grant fishing rights to Arabs living in the area, based on the conditions that obtained during the British Mandate. (6) The delegation will refrain from taking any initiative that would cause the talks to break up. For now it will endeavor to keep them going and delay their suspension. Every effort should be made to have suspension of the talks attributed to Syrian intransigence.

Notes

1. Vigier was brought up to date on the discussions in late March. See Comay to the Israel Embassy in Washington, telegram MT45, 1 April 1953, 130.16/2953/10.
2. See No. 124.
3. Evidently should read "1953." See Harkabi's letter of the same date to the Chief of the General Staff, in File 130.02/2434/3, and the accompanying map in File 130.16/2953/11.

165. Editorial Note

Israel's Participation in the Meeting of the Political Committee of the UN General Assembly, 13–16 April 1953

On Monday, 13 April, the Minister of Labor, Golda Meyerson, addressed the Political Committee of the Seventh UN General Assembly, which was debating Poland's draft resolution on ways to strengthen peace and friendship between nations. Even before the second session of the Seventh General Assembly convened, the Israeli delegation had decided to raise, during this debate, the matter of Soviet hostility towards the Jews and Israel (see No. 93 and n. 1 there, and No. 108 and n. 2 there). After Stalin's death and the Soviet announcement of the release of the Jewish doctors (see No. 154), the delegation decided to soften the aggressive tenor of its criticism; it was in this spirit that Meyerson delivered her speech.

After general comments on the Korean problem and international peace, which constituted only the external framework for the core of her speech, Meyerson focused on the Prague trials and the "Doctors' Plot." She expressed her hope that the condemnation of the false accusation leveled against the doctors "denoted an intention to eliminate the atmosphere attending the anti-Jewish campaign." The Government of Israel government had observed the Soviet statements "with satisfaction and relief."

At the same time, Meyerson did not mince words in her criticism of Soviet policy towards the Jewish minority in the U.S.S.R. Israel, she said, had been confronted by the wild charge of a worldwide Jewish plot involving the Joint Distribution Committee, the World Zionist Organization,

and other Jewish organizations. She noted with great satisfaction that Moscow had had the courage to retract the accusations against the Jewish doctors, thereby admitting that the Joint and the Zionist movement, too, were blameless. Meyerson emphasized that the main problem of the Jewish communities in Eastern Europe had not been resolved; they had to be granted a greater measure of self-determination, in terms both of organizing their cultural life and of the ability to participate in the common endeavor of the Jewish people to renew its national life in the State of Israel.

The Soviet representative did not respond to the speech. The Uruguayan delegate, Fabregat, did refer to it, however, and declared that the sacrifices suffered by the Jewish people during the Nazi era were a warning to the postwar generation and to those to come. The representatives of both Cuba and the Dominican Republic castigated antisemitism in Eastern Europe. The Polish delegate rejected any intervention by foreign actors such as the Government of Israel or the World Zionist Organization in the internal affairs of Polish citizens.

The Arab representatives seized the opportunity to launch a virulent attack on Israel. The remarks by the Iraqi delegate, on 15 April, were particularly obnoxious, comparing Israel to Hitler and asserting that Israel had done to the Arabs what Hitler did to the Jews.

On Thursday, 16 April, Eban replied to the Arab invective. They had revealed "a hysterical Jew-baiting vehemence"—especially the Iraqi representative, who had defiled the memory of the six million victims of the Holocaust. Eban also attacked Soviet policy, stating, inter alia, that the retraction of the charges against the doctors was proof that "anti-Jewish incitement of the very worst kind had, in the first months of 1953, been officially disseminated for a time over the whole of Eastern Europe." Israel's sense of satisfaction in the wake of the Moscow communiqué could not nullify its anger at the shockingly antisemitic opinions that had been officially expressed at the Prague trials. The central issue, according to Eban, was whether the Soviet statement was an isolated phenomenon or indicated a sincere intention to clear the foul atmosphere that had accompanied the antisemitic libels throughout Eastern Europe.

Eban's strong language triggered a Soviet response. Vyshinsky termed it "a mixture of insinuation and slander, designed to poison the atmosphere," and said that he had no intention of responding to such filth. The Czechoslovak delegate carried on in the same vein and declared that Zionism was simply a tool of American intelligence. He accused the Israeli representative of slandering Czechoslovakia and other countries and of interfering in the domestic affairs of his country when he referred to the Slanský trial, a trial which, according to the Czechoslovak delegate, had been conducted according to law before a duly constituted court that had found him guilty of serious crimes.

Vyshinsky's attack caused anxiety in the Foreign Ministry and Eban came in for some criticism. Eytan queried why it had been necessary to revive the Soviet issue and give Vyshinsky an opportunity to attack Israel after Meyerson had already successfully dealt with the issue in her speech. The criticism, which leaked to the press (*Ha'aretz*, 17 April 1953), added to the Foreign Ministry's embarrassment, and Eban was asked to explain his response. His explanations can be found in Nos. 184, 186, and 197. (See also Eytan's telegrams to Eban: Y147, 17 April 1953, and Y250, 19 April 1953, File 130.09/2330/14. See also Lourie to Eytan, telegram X636, 17 April 1953, 130.09/2330/19; and Eban to Eytan, telegram W120, 130.09/2310/2.)

166. Editorial Note

Submission of a Note to the United States and the United Kingdom, 14 April 1953

On 14 April, Israel's representatives in Washington and London submitted the following note to the State Department and Foreign Office. The contents of the note were transmitted orally to the French and Turkish representatives in Israel. When he delivered the note to the deputy assistant secretary of state, Jernegan, Goitein stated that although Israel was aware that the talks on evacuating the Canal would be conducted between Egypt and Britain, there was no doubt that there would be consultations with the United States at every stage; hence Israel had seen fit to submit the note to the United States as well. Israel had an interest in the defense of the Canal and the entire region as well as in free passage through the Canal. It favored the talks, but feared that, after their conclusion, British forces would evacuate the area, giving the Egyptian army an advantage over Israel. Israel expected the United States to bring its influence to bear in this matter and urgently requested continual updates on the status of the negotiations and an opportunity to present its position.

Jernegan replied that Israel's request required thought and consultation. He himself appreciated the importance of the issue for Israel. Israel must understand, however, that consultation and the transmission of information while negotiations were under way are extremely sensitive matters. American activity would be conducted behind the scenes, and it would be difficult to relay information provided by one of the parties in confidence. Jernegan asked to what extent the departure of the British would strengthen the Egyptian army. Goitein answered that the transfer to Egypt of British Ordnance Corps and RAF installations was likely to improve the efficiency of its armed forces. Jernegan had doubts about the Egyptians' ability to operate such installations. He said that Israel must put pressure

chiefly on Britain, because it was party to the negotiations. The Americans had given the same advice to the French, who had made a similar request. (See Herzog's report on Goitein's meeting with Jernegan, 14 April 1953, 130.20/2483/1.)

Selwyn Lloyd, who received the note from Elath, promised to keep Israel informed of developments in the negotiations with Egypt and said that nothing would happen without its knowledge. For the time being, he rejected consultations at the political level, favoring consultations on the military echelon, but made no firm commitment about the latter. (See Elath to the Foreign Ministry, telegram L899, 14 April 1953, 130.09/2319/3.) See also No. 176.

167. Note from the Israel Ambassador in Washington to the Secretary of State of the United States. 14 April 1953

Note

1. See Vol. 6, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, p. 257.

168. B. Razin (Sofia) to the Eastern Europe Division. 14 April 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.11/2507/5

Razin reports on his off-the-record meeting at the residence of the Czechoslovak ambassador in Sofia, during which he was told that renewal of relations between the Soviet Union and Israel could be expected. The ambassador also said that they had all awaited Israel's reaction to the release of the doctors and rejoiced at Israel's conciliatory stance. Now it is possible to believe that the explosion at the Soviet legation in Tel Aviv was the work of a single disappointed individual. He added that the Soviet ambassador, who had returned from Moscow in mid-March, had given instructions to seek out contacts with the West, in particular with Austria and Israel.

Razin asks that the source of his information be kept confidential.

Note

1. See No. 155, paragraph (2).

169. M. Comay (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Embassy in Washington.[1] 14 April 1953

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2309/13

Comay reports on unexpected progress in the previous day's meeting with the Syrians. (1) The Syrians accepted Israel's position concerning the border in the northern demilitarized zone, namely, that the area be partitioned on the basis of plots being farmed.[2] It was decided to establish a subcommittee to determine this border. (2) In the central demilitarized zone, the border will run along the eastern bank of the Jordan. Syria's water rights will be limited to the quantity it uses during the dry season, plus ten percent. Demilitarization will be abolished and restrictions on civilians lifted. Absentee landowners will receive monetary compensation; 3000 dunams in the Darbashiya area will be allotted to Arab landowners who leave their property. (3) In the southern zone, a border was suggested that corresponds to the Israeli proposal.[3] In this area, the restrictions on armed forces and fortifications will remain in effect. Several issues were left open.

Comay adds that, although the talks were noncommittal, it is the closest the two sides have ever come to an agreement. Jadid was following instructions to facilitate an agreement, but the Israel delegation cannot explain this sudden turnabout. The best guess is that Shishakli needs an agreement to strengthen his position with the Americans and apparently also vis-à-vis other Arab states.[4]

Notes

1. Also sent to London, Paris, and Rome.
2. See No. 136.
3. See No. 124.
4. In his summary of the meeting Harkabi listed the following points: (1) There is no doubt that at the meeting the Syrians displayed a marked change of attitude and desire to reach an agreement. Riley and Vigier attribute this change of heart to new instructions from Shishakli. In a private conversation, Jadid admitted that the Powers are exerting pressure on them too. The Arab world is currently fragmented and divided; this too may have a bearing on the Syrians' attitude. On the other hand, the conference of Arab delegations to the mixed armistice commissions, scheduled for mid-month, is liable to lead to a renewed stiffening of the Syrian position. (2) The agreements formulated must serve as starting points; Israel can perhaps extract better conditions through artful phrasing. On the other hand, the give-and-take must be such that Syria can present it to the Arabs, so there is no room for far-fetched formulations that speak of political accords. The Syrians view any agreement as an arrangement in the context of the armistice agreement and will not accept any significant deviation from this agreement. (3) On the matter of fishing rights, it was his

impression that the Syrians would not budge from their position, since for them this is a political issue. If Israel wants to make a concession on this issue, it could empower the UN to issue permits on its behalf, on a temporary basis. This compromise might be worth putting to the United Nations. (4) The problem caused by the back-and-forth movement [of the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee] could be circumvented by demarcating a ten-meter strip (if the Government approves). The juridical aspects of the matter still require thorough investigation. On the other hand, Israel must find a satisfactory formula with respect to the Jordan River—perhaps specifying "one meter from the riverbed" instead of "one meter from the Jordan." In Harkabi's opinion, moving the Syrians away from the Jordan, after they have already been allowed access to it, would be a considerable achievement and enhance Israeli sovereignty over the river—the problem that has concerned Israel lately. (5) There are no serious problems with the northern and southern demilitarized zones; Israel might be able to get the Syrians to be more flexible there after things begin moving in the central zone. (6) It is not possible to cover all the ground and conduct an exhaustive discussion of all problems in a single meeting. A number of issues remain unresolved. To obtain a clear picture of them, further inquiry and details are required. The problem of evaluating compensation payments is best left to experts. Here Israel must demand that the assessment be based on land prices in Syria, a justifiable stance since the payments are meant to be used to buy land there (Harkabi to the Chief of the General Staff, 15 April 1953, 130.02/2434/4).

5. The meeting took place on 3 May; See No. 195.

170. Editorial Note

The Foreign Minister's Visit to Several Latin American Countries

After his visit to the United States (see No. 163), Foreign Minister Sharett went on to four Latin American countries at the invitation of their governments and Jewish communities. He was in Argentina on 14–23 April and again on 27–29 April; in Chile on 23–27 April; in Uruguay on 29 April–3 May; and in Brazil on 3–10 May.

Sharett met with the presidents and foreign ministers of these countries and signed cultural agreements with Chile, Uruguay, and Argentina. During his visit to Argentina, the validity of the commercial payments agreement between the two countries, signed in April 1950, was extended.

The Minister's visit also had a Jewish side. Alongside his meetings with politicians, Sharett visited Jewish communities, met their leaders, and addressed public meetings. (For details on his trip, see No. 201.) Sharett reported on his trip to the Government on 17 May and to the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on 19 May.

171. W. Eytan to E. Elath (telegram). 16 April 1953

Notes

1. Elath asked for instructions for his meeting with Churchill, which Selwyn Lloyd had promised to arrange for him (14 April 1953, 93.04/40/14).
2. On Gen. Robertson's visit in February 1951, and subsequent correspondence with the British Foreign Secretary, see Vol. 6, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, pp. 58–59, Nos. 68, 69, 71 and 72, and Nos. 138 and 508 (appendix); on the military delegation, see Vol. 7, Nos. 379 and 385.
3. The reference is to Ben-Gurion's proposal to Gen. Robertson that in times of emergency Israel be included in the Middle East defense system as if it were a member of the British Commonwealth—like New Zealand, for example. (See Vol. 6, p. 131.)
4. The meeting with Churchill did not materialize. See No. 222 and n. 4 there.
5. The reference is to the congratulatory message sent by Churchill on the inauguration of the Yemin Orde Children's Village, on 14 April. The village, named for Orde Wingate, was established by contributions from the Jewish community in Britain.

172. M. Sharett (Buenos Aires) to D. Ben-Gurion. 17 April 1953

Orig.: IMDEA 890.73/2177

Sharett reports on his visit to Washington. His first impression is that the moral and intellectual level of senior policy-makers has declined. The new president falls below his predecessor in terms of inner seriousness and the extent to which he lets his decisions be determined by his conscience. The new secretary of state is intellectually inferior to his predecessor. The same applies to Wilson at the Pentagon: his horizons are limited and he seems slow on the uptake. Bedell Smith is not like the others. Sharett's second impression is that the new Administration lacks familiarity with and mastery of the issues. The president is only superficially familiar with Israel-related issues at present, and Dulles seems to be groping in the dark. One should not despair of the possibility of "educating" the new team, but this will require considerable effort. Sharett's third impression is of a lack of initiative and a tendency to defer planning and decision-making—whether because of the natural confusion of those new on the job, or because the Soviet peace offensive caught them by surprise. In such a situation, considerable importance attaches to the career foreign-service officers, such as Byroade, with whom Sharett met.

The American analysis implied by Byroade's remarks and reflected in conversations with the others is that the Middle East is an untamed region that is wide open to Soviet influence. The situation is very bad in Iran,

from where the infection is apt to spread westward. The breaches must be closed and the situation stabilized so as to obstruct Soviet expansion and create a solid basis for regional defense. To this end, Naguib's regime must be strengthened and efforts made to achieve peace between Israel and the Arabs. All praised Naguib and expressed confidence in his pro-Western intentions. Strengthening Naguib entails concessions on the Suez Canal, in contrast to the British position. As for peace with Israel, the view is that this is required to prevent Communism from fishing in troubled waters and to lay the groundwork for effective regional defense. This does not mean that no steps towards the establishment of a Middle East defense organization will be taken until peace is established. Nevertheless, in the absence of peace the defense structure would be incomplete. Hence the sooner it is concluded, the better. Progress towards peace entails concessions on Israel's part. On the subject of the Middle East defense organization, Sharett encountered two attitudes in Washington. The first favors a comprehensive organization embracing both Israel and Arab states; the second envisages separate agreements with the Arab countries on the one hand and with Israel on the other. The first approach makes peace a prerequisite, whereas the second seems to be feasible without peace.

The demand for Israeli concessions is not a clear line in U.S. policy. Although there is no official position, the very fact that talk of concessions is again surfacing, perhaps even more vigorously than in the past, should sound a serious note of warning for Israel. This orientation found full expression in the conversation with Byroade.[2] Byroade explicitly asked what concessions Israel would be prepared to make in return for peace. Sharett replied that Israel's only concession was acceptance of its current borders. Byroade rejected this; he said that, in order to create a climate for serious negotiations, Israel must display a willingness to give up territory. Sharett strongly rejected the idea and castigated such a demand as baseless. Why should any Arab country benefit at Israel's expense? How can such a demand be made in the sixth year of Israel's existence? Byroade argued that Israel had expanded its territory beyond that allotted it. Sharett reminded him that this expansion was the result of an armed attack against Israel; only armed force could attempt to wrest this territory from Israel. A settlement based on Byroade's conditions would be the antithesis of peace. Byroade retorted that this means perpetuation of the current situation; the United States cannot accept this for long. The United States might well be compelled to stipulate what it considers to be suitable conditions of peace; these would please neither the Arab countries nor Israel. Sharett warned against such a step, adding that only by force could the United States deprive Israel of territory under its control. Byroade expressed disappointment at Sharett's stand, and the conversation become distinctly strained.

On the subject of the refugees, Sharett explained Israel's position against their return, noting that Israel is willing to pay compensation. Byroade said

that nothing would move forward without an Israeli declaration of its readiness to accept the refugees; such a declaration would not harm Israel, since in any case the refugees would not wish to return. Sharett did not accept this position; a declaration about a token number would merely encourage those who wish to return and make them think twice about settling in Arab countries. The two could not agree on this issue; the discussion proceeded in a tense atmosphere. At the end of the meeting, Byroade admitted that two personal tragedies that had occurred that day had influenced the course of the talk. He later apologized.[3]

Sharett is inclined to accept Byroade's apology and qualification that he had been presenting his personal views, which should not be construed as official policy. Nevertheless, Byroade's line of thought is cause for concern. Sharett fears that Israel may be heading for a confrontation with American policy, similar to those that marked the Negev discussions of 1947 and the trusteeship plan of 1948.

In light of his conversation with Byroade, Sharett endeavored, in his meetings with Dulles and the president, to persuade them that on the issue of peace the United States must exert pressure only on the Arabs, and especially on Egypt. He told them that by no means should the United States deviate from this framework and enter the sphere of planning the parameters of peace.

Sharett's conclusion from his meetings is that Israel must intensify its efforts to persuade the United States government to refrain from presenting its own peace plan, while simultaneously making American policymakers familiar with the elements of a proposed peace settlement that would justify Israel's stand, or that would at least limit the area of disagreement with the U.S. In the course of a meeting with senators from both parties, Sharett discovered that the refugee issue stirs up American public opinion against Israel. He managed to persuade the senators that the grant-in-aid should not be cut. The general tendency to cut appropriations should not be at Israel's expense; what is more, the appropriate yardstick for comparisons between Israel and the Arabs is not population, but the efforts being made and the development thrust in each country.

Notes

1. See No. 163.
2. See No. 159.
3. See No. 115, n. 3.
4. See No. 159, n. 3.
5. *Sic.* Should read: "if."
6. The reference is to difficulties that arose during the deliberations among the coalition parties on the State Education Act. These reached a crisis on 25 May in a controversy over singing the national anthem and raising the flag in the schools. See No. 236, n. 5.

173. W. Eytan to Israel Missions Abroad (telegram). 19 April 1953

Notes

1. In the telegram, he reported on three incidents that had occurred that week: (1) On 17 April, a Jordanian attack on Israeli watchmen near Mevo Betar claimed the lives of two watchmen. (2) On 18 April, a Jordanian soldier killed an Israeli woman in the Musrara neighborhood of Jerusalem [which abutted the no-man's land between the Israeli and Jordanian sectors]. (3) On 17 April, in the open sea off the Gaza Strip, an Egyptian warship fired at Israeli fishing boats, intercepted them, and searched them (see copy of telegram, undated, 130.16/2949/2).
2. On 18 April, the Hebrew-language program of Radio Damascus broadcast a statement by the Egyptian spokesman to the effect that the Israeli fishing boats were intercepted in response to the interception of two Egyptian fishing well outside Israeli territorial waters, and that Egypt had decided to react to the use of force through the use of greater force.
3. See No. 145 (Editorial Note) and No. 146.
4. That morning, the representatives of the United States, Britain, France, and Turkey were summoned to the Foreign Ministry, where Eytan briefed them along the lines of his telegraphed instructions. (See Bendor to Eban, 24 April 1953, 93.08/357/43.)

174. A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram). 21 April 1953

Note

1. See No. 77.

175. E. Elath to M. Comay (telegram). 22 April 1953

Notes

1. See No. 173.
2. See No. 167 and No. 166 (Editorial Note).
3. The official talks between Great Britain and Egypt on the Suez Canal, which began in Cairo on 27 April 1953.
4. See No. 176.

176. Note from Sir Winston Churchill to E. Elath. 22 April 1953

Notes

1. On the circumstances surrounding the submission of the note, see No. 175.
2. See No. 166 (Editorial Note).

177. Ch. Herzog (Washington) to the United States Division. 22 April 1953

Coded Tel.: S382; Inc.: 130.09/2310/2

In accordance with instructions from the Foreign Ministry,[1] Herzog reports on Eban's meeting with Byroade and Waller, at which he was present. Eban spoke of the deteriorating situation on the Jordanian border. He provided details of incidents over the past year[2] and mentioned Israel's proposals to Jordan for improving the situation, to which there has been no response to date.[3] He laid particular stress on the incidents of the past week[4] and especially the incident with Egypt,[5] which reflects the Powers' failure to compel implementation of the Security Council resolution. He asked whether the United States' response to Israel after the February incident[6] was not now appropriate vis-à-vis the Arabs. Byroade answered in the affirmative. Eban emphasized that the weakness of the Mixed Armistice Commission is the result of conclusions drawn by the Arabs from the Powers' failure to recognize the causes of and responsibility for such border incidents. He asked how the United States suggests that Israel act, when it does not itself insist on implementation of Security Council resolutions. Byroade replied that he was convinced by Eban's arguments; he was prepared to give instructions that forceful diplomatic action be implemented among the Arabs. He asked Waller to clarify why the Jordanians have not responded to Israel's proposals for an arrangement along the border.

After the meeting, Eban explained that Israel's intention, when it submitted the note on Suez,[6] was merely to obtain information on the progress of talks so as to find the right moment for pressuring Egypt on the issue of peace. Byroade said that even if the U.S. is unable to supply information, he is willing to discuss the issue.

Notes

1. See No. 173.

2. Eban read Byroade a memorandum on the incidents along the Jordanian border. See the text of the memorandum and the State Department's version of the talk in *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1173–77.
3. See No. 146.
4. See No. 173, n. 1. In addition to the incidents mentioned there, Eban reported on the following: On 18 April a police force encountered a band of infiltrators in northern Jerusalem; one of the infiltrators, wearing an army uniform, was killed. On 19 April, a soldier of the Arab Legion fired at a house in the Muṣrara neighborhood of Jerusalem. On 20 April, Jordanian infiltrators murdered two persons in the Qiryat Moshe neighborhood of Jerusalem. On the same day, an Israeli patrol encountered armed Jordanians in Israeli territory near Beit Guvrin; the Jordanians retreated only after a prolonged exchange of fire.
5. See Nos. 90 and 89 (Editorial Note).
6. See No. 167.

178. Meeting: D. Ben-Gurion–Sir Francis Evans. 22 April 1953

Notes

1. Walter Eytan was also present at the meeting and recorded the proceedings. The document is dated 23 April 1953.
2. See Vol. 6, Nos. 68 and 72 (p. 131).
3. Ibid., Nos. 138 and 508 (appendix).
4. See Vol. 7, Nos. 379 and 385.
5. In order to keep the meeting confidential, it was decided to inform the press that the discussion had focused on infiltration incidents. See Ben-Gurion's diary, 22 April 1953, IDF archives. Cf. Ben-Gurion's consultation with Makleff, Eytan, and Shiloah, prior to the meeting (ibid.).

179. G. Avner to Sh. Bentsur. 22 April 1953

Orig.: 130.11/2492/22

Avner reports on talks at the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, ten days after the release of the Jewish doctors. His request for meetings with Kutas and Sik were readily agreed to. Although Kutas received him with great courtesy, he did not answer affirmatively concerning the group of immigrants from Hungary and blamed the delay on the interior, police, and passports ministries. When Avner asserted that the Hungarian government was not meeting its commitments, Kutas explained that the agreement on the emigration of 3000 Jews from Hungary did not specify dates of implementation; the promise given in October 1952 had been made by other minis-

tries, not the Foreign Ministry. He added that because the delay was administrative the Foreign Ministry could not interfere. The matter is being handled by the Interior Ministry; he will notify Avner when there is any progress. Avner asked whether the Foreign Ministry supports implementation of the agreement, from the political point of view. Kutas again replied that the problem is purely administrative. As a counterweight to Avner's arguments, the Hungarians raised the matter of the Israeli press, which is "publishing lies about Hungary." They asserted that attacks in the Israeli press continue even after those in the Hungarian press have ceased and repeated the well-worn argument that Hungary, like Israel, has a free press. Avner left the meeting with the impression that the friendly attitude was merely a facade and they were still not prepared to take any practical action.

The next day, Sik greeted him most cordially. Avner enumerated a number of actions that would demonstrate the improvement in relations: (1) continuing the policy of avoiding attacks on Israel in the Hungarian press; (2) release of the imprisoned clerk; (3) implementation of the agreement to allow a group of Hungarian Jews to emigrate; (4) permission to distribute the Budapest legation's bulletin, as the Hungarians are permitted to do in Tel Aviv; (5) granting exit permits to persons with dual nationality, especially to promote family reunification; (6) releasing those imprisoned for Zionist activity.

Sik responded warmly but did not go into details. He promised to bring the matter up with his superiors. The group of emigrants is still on the agenda. Although the talk with Sik was more positive than that with Kutas, it still did not instill confidence that any of the issues raised by Avner will be settled.

Avner adds that, since these meetings, the atmosphere has already cooled off somewhat. The local press portrayed the confrontation between Eban and Vyshinsky[2] in a fairly negative light. He is not optimistic. In his opinion, as long as there is no green light from Moscow nothing will move forward, even though outwardly the Hungarians continue to be friendly and pleasant.

Notes

1. The reference is to the promise given by the Hungarian authorities, in late 1952, to allow one group to emigrate as part of the agreement signed in 1950 for the emigration of 3000 Hungarian Jews. (See Vol. 7, No. 293, and n. 3 there.)
2. See No. 165 (Editorial Note).

180. D. Ben-Gurion: Diary Note [Tel Aviv]. 23 April 1953

IMDEA

Ben-Gurion notes the recent incidents in Jerusalem[1] and Makleff's statement to Riley that Israel is prepared to speak with a high-ranking Jordanian official. He also writes about the consultations that morning on the talks with the Syrians, involving Dayan, Harkabi, Eytan, Tekoah, and Shiloah. The Foreign Ministry and IDF representatives held that the talks should be continued and agreement reached on partition of the demilitarized zone (approximately thirty percent to Syria and seventy percent to Israel). Israel should insist that the border along the Sea of Galilee be fixed rather than varying with the water level. It should also propose a pipeline from the Banias to Israel, or at least a commitment that the status quo on the use of Banias water will be maintained. The same applies to the Yarmuk. Ben-Gurion decided to place the matter before the Government.[2]

There had also been consultations that morning to prepare for Dulles's upcoming visit. Ben-Gurion proposed three subjects: (1) Middle East defense (strengthening Israel's military potential, the IDF's role in regional defense, and Israel's place in the regional command); (2) Israel-Arab relations (Suez, the boycott, infiltration, refugees and compensation, nonaggression pacts, peace, economic cooperation, and joint development plans for the region); (3) stabilizing the economy (grant-in-aid, debt consolidation, development).

Notes

1. The shooting that morning was a sequel to the exchanges of fire that erupted on the evening of 22 April between IDF forces and the Arab Legion along the armistice line in Jerusalem. On the circumstances that led to this development, see Ben-Gurion's diary, 21 April 1953, IDF archives.
2. See No. 169.
3. The Government session was held as planned on 26 April. See No. 190 and n. 1 there.

181. W. Eytan to the Israel Embassy in Washington.[1] 23 April 1953

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2319/2

In the wake of the incidents in Jerusalem,[2] Eytan instructs the heads of the missions to record a strong protest against the Jordanians. They are to

stress in particular that the Jordanians have killed five persons during the past week[3] and are attempting to create unrest in advance of Dulles's visit. It is to be pointed out that the actions of the Jordanians and the Egyptians prove that it was a mistake to supply them with arms and that the Suez Canal must not be left in Egyptian control. Eytan recommends avoiding a personal attack on De Ridder, while pointing out the ineffectiveness of the UN apparatus in dealing with the matter.

Notes

1. Sent also to Paris, London, and Ankara.
2. Eytan reported on the exchanges of fire that took place on 22 April (23 April 1953, 130.09/2319/2). See No. 180, n. 1.
3. See No. 177, n. 4.

182. W. Eytan (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 24 April 1953

Coded Tel.: 130.09/2319/2

Eytan reports on the special meeting between the Israel and Jordanian delegations to the Armistice Commission, chaired by Riley. Riley stated that both parties had violated the truce and it was difficult to determine who had fired the first shot in Jerusalem.[1] He recommended a settlement on the following basis: (1) The Armistice Commission will investigate and determine responsibility for the shooting. (2) A cease-fire will be declared forthwith. (3) All reinforcements will be withdrawn from Jerusalem. (4) There will be no interference with the free movement of civilians. (5) High-ranking representatives will meet to solve the problem on the borders. The Israel representative said that it is obvious who bears responsibility for the situation; nor has Israel received a reply to the memorandum it submitted on 25 March.[2] Notwithstanding this, that very same day he tendered an affirmative answer to Riley's proposal. He stated that orders to cease fire had already been given; the IDF will only return fire. The reinforcements that entered Jerusalem will be removed only after calm has been restored. The Jordanians, too, accepted Riley's proposals and declared they will not shoot even if fired at.

Notes

1. See No. 180, n. 1.
2. See No. 146.

183. B. Razin (Sofia) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 25 April 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.; 130.09/2507/5

Razin reports that the Polish ambassador had paid him a farewell visit before winding up his tenure. During their talk on the future of Israel-U.S.S.R. relations, the ambassador said that the initiative for a renewal of relations should come from Israel, since the bomb had been planted in Tel Aviv, not in Moscow. Razin called his visitor's attention to Israel's declaration of 4 April,[1] adding that he does not believe that the Government of Israel can add anything to this declaration, especially since it was not Israel that had severed relations and there was no guarantee of a positive response by the Soviets. The ambassador offered to find out whether the response would be positive; in such a case, Israel should make overtures to the Soviet Union. Razin answered that, logically speaking, there is no room for an Israeli initiative on the matter before an affirmative response is guaranteed.

Notes

1. See No. 156 (Editorial Note).
2. See the detailed report on the conversation and on subsequent contacts with the Polish ambassador in Razin's letters to Bentsur, 26 April 1953 and 10 May 1953, 130.11/2507/5. See also No. 216.

184. Israel Delegation to the United Nations (New York) to W. Eytan and M. Sharett. 25 April 1953

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.02/2410/19

The Israel delegation to the UN convened for a comprehensive discussion of the deliberations at the General Assembly, in light of the Soviet response to Eban's speech at the last session of the Political Committee.[1] The delegation reached the following conclusions: (1) Vyshinsky's remarks had been very harsh and it would have been better had he not made them. On the other hand, the points made by Israel's representative, who defended the Jewish people and Zionist movement, should not be measured by the reaction of Vyshinsky, who is known for his venomous replies. This would be tantamount to Israel's waiving its sovereign right to freedom of thought and speech. (2) The head of delegation bore responsibility for the texts of the two speeches by the Israeli representatives. The draft had been

reviewed by senior members of the delegation. (3) The two speeches in no way slandered or defamed the Soviets. On the contrary, both had sought to praise them for their statement of 4 April.[2]

There is a tendency in Israel to overlook the fact that Moscow had rectified only the misrepresentation that was causing it problems, namely, the doctors' trial, but had not retracted its other accusations against Israel and Zionism. Furthermore, these accusations were made even more forceful by the denial only of the Doctors' Plot, by the severance of ties, and by the Soviets' wooing of the Arabs and encouragement of their extremism, as expressed in Vyshinsky's speech. The delegation feared that Israel's declaration of 4 April may have given Moscow the feeling that Israel was content with the release of the doctors and would drop all the other outstanding problems between it and Moscow. This is why the delegation had decided to have Eban speak as he did. The delegation believes that if the Soviets are sincere in their effort to remedy past misrepresentations they might be expected to intensify their efforts at conciliation in the wake of Eban's speech. (4) Some delegations had supported Israel's past condemnation of Soviet malice and it had been necessary to defend their positions after they had been attacked by the Russians, Poles, and Czechs for their statements. (5) Although many delegations condemned antisemitism, not one came to the defense of Zionism, leaving Eban to carry this burden alone. (6) Despite the atmosphere in the committee, Eban's speech had made it clear to the Soviets, to the Jewish people, and to the entire world that the April statement had not settled the U.S.S.R.'s account with Israel, the Jewish people, and Zionism.

Notes

1. See No. 165 (Editorial Note).
2. See No. 154 (Editorial Note).
3. See No. 156 (Editorial Note).

185. Sh. Divon (Paris) to E. Najar. 25 April 1953

Copy: 93.02/177/7

Divon reports on his meeting with Marchal on 25 April: (1) With regard to the incidents along the Jordanian border, Marchal said that members of the French mission in Israel question the ability of the armistice machinery to deal effectively with the situation; they are unanimous in attributing this to the Arabs' total lack of trust in Riley. They are concerned that the Arab Legion, too, had participated in the clashes. The three Powers are consider-

ing an approach to both parties, but no formula has been devised as yet. He repeated that he understands Israel's position and admires its restraint. (2) Egypt and the Middle East Command: One should not pin too much hope on the Anglo-Egyptian talks. The Turks have learned that there is no point in attempting to reach a settlement with the Arabs as a single bloc; it is preferable to deal directly with each individual Arab country. The French view this approach most favorably. The idea of adding Pakistan to the Command is slowly fading from the agenda. The French do not wish to be a party to the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations but will insist on being involved when the talks reach the practical stage. (3) Suez: On the issue of free passage through the Suez Canal, the French have informed the Americans and British that, when the time is ripe, they will demand that this problem be thoroughly investigated by the three Powers. They are also considering calling a conference of countries with an interest in passage through the Canal. Marchal disclosed that the Egyptian ambassador, speaking off the record, raised the idea of such a conference, with the participation of Egypt and Israel. (4) Syria: The French have warned the Americans and the British of the threat to Syria's integrity and stability in the wake of the Iraqi action. The British are inclined to take a lighter view of the situation, whereas the French remain vigilant. (5) Marchal promised to make efforts to further the trade agreement. (6) He also expressed his hope that French cultural activity in Israel could move ahead. (7) He noted that the French ambassador in Israel had been instructed to promote the relations between the two countries. (8) Divon raised the issue of the Arab boycott and called Marchal's attention to the danger of using the economic weapon in a political war. It is apt to be turned against the French in North Africa. Marchal agreed with him and promised to look into what the French can do in this area.

Notes

1. The name is not clear in the original and has been omitted here.
2. The reference is to the resolution adopted by the conference of Asian socialist parties held in Rangoon in January (see No. 3 [Editorial Note]) concerning the struggle for independence by Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. The resolution expressed solidarity with the national struggles of the peoples of North Africa and proposed convening a conference of representative of Afro-Asian governments to discuss what support could be extended to the national liberation movements in these countries. Thanks to Sharett's efforts, harsh denunciation of French colonialism was deleted from the resolution; furthermore, the adoption of anti-French measures was not included in the objectives of the proposed Afro-Asian conference. (See Divon to Marchal, 24 April 1953 and the text of the resolution appended there, in File 93.02/163/13.)

186. A. Eban (Washington) to D. Ben-Gurion. 25 April 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2310/12

Eban calls Ben-Gurion's attention to the telegram from the Israel delegation in New York[1] and asks for his opinion. He explains that he cannot continue to represent Israel without a sense of trust and identification on the part of the Israeli leadership. This confidence was missing during his last campaign, for the first time since he had been charged with directing Israel's international efforts. Eban emphasizes that he cannot remain at his post if he does not receive backing for the line he had adopted during the last UN session.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 184 and n. 1 there.
2. Ben-Gurion answered Eban that no one had intended to challenge his assessments and that the complete confidence in him "felt by all of us has not diminished" (telegram, 29 April 1953, IDF archives, 890.73/4122).

187. Sir Francis Evans to D. Ben-Gurion. 26 April 1953

Notes

1. See No. 180, n. 1.
2. See Ben-Gurion's reply in No. 189.

188. Meeting: Sir Francis Evans–W. Eytan (on 24 April). 26 April 1953

Notes

1. See No. 178.
2. See Vol. 5, No. 218.

189. W. Eytan to E. Elath (telegram). 28 April 1953

Notes

1. See No. 187, and No. 180, n. 1.

2. See No. 173, n. 1, and No. 177, n. 4.

190. Y. Harkabi (Tel Aviv) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 29 April 1953

Copy: 130.02/2434/4

Harkabi summarizes the instructions for the Israel delegation to the talks with the Syrians, following the Government session of 26 April:[1] (1) The Government approved the Prime Minister's basic approach to the talks and their continuation, in accordance with the general line agreed upon during the last meeting with the Syrians.[2] The Prime Minister instructed that an agreement be submitted to the Government before being signed.

(2) The northern zone: (a) It was agreed that the delegation should attempt to exchange territories so that Israel will acquire the Banias where it crosses the Mandatory border. (b) Should the Syrians refuse, the delegation will propose that an underground pipeline be laid. (c) A retreat from this position, leaving the northern zone demilitarized, is possible. (d) To prevent the Syrians from diverting the Banias, an article dealing with future use of its waters would be included in the agreement.

(3) The central zone: Israel demands that it be allowed to impound floodwaters. The Syrians would be compensated for the territory lost as a result. The border would run one meter from the edge of the reservoir.

(4) The southern zone: The border, running one meter from the waterline, should be fixed rather than variable. Israel must stress that its renunciation of the al-Hamma salient does not prejudice its rights to the Yarmuk.

(5) Tekoah will draft the phrasing that the delegation will present concerning Israel's right to the Banias and Yarmuk and arguments about the stability of the ten-meter border. (6) All told, Israel would have to give up 13,000 dunams, but would gain 49,000 dunams of land in the demilitarized zones. Israel would also have to compensate the Syrians with 4,000 dunams outside the demilitarized zone. (7) Because the problem of compensation has not yet been ironed out, the delegation has not received instructions for conducting negotiations on this issue. (8) The territory demarcated by the Syrians as compensation in land includes Kibbutz Gonen, but it seems that the Syrians would not refuse to redraw the map and leave Gonen in Israel.

Notes

1. See No. 180. The Government's decision, whose main lines are presented here, was adopted over the opposition of Police Minister Bechor Shitrit, who emphasized the

shortcomings of the proposed settlement. He made the following points: there was no suitable compensation for al-Hamma, which would be transferred to the Syrians; the sources of the Jordan River in the Banias were not guaranteed; under the agreement, the Syrians would be only one meter away from the Jordan River, the Sea of Galilee, and Kibbutz Ein Gev, creating an infiltration problem. Ben-Gurion, for his part, supported the accord despite its shortcomings and pointed to the problems of the demilitarized zone because of the establishment of civilian settlements there (Haon and Tel Qazir). He feared that without an agreement on partition of the demilitarized zone, Israel would be accused of unlawful encroachment on Arab territory over which it has no sovereignty; hence it is preferable to partition the zone. He also emphasized the importance of the development of the Galilee for Israel's future and the need for calm and the prevention of conflict throughout the next decade.

2. See No. 169.
3. See No. 164.

191. A. Eban to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram). 30 April 1953

Notes

1. This article allowed the two signatories to the agreement to ask the secretary-general of the United Nations to convene a conference of their representatives to reassess, amend, or abrogate any of the agreement's stipulations, except for articles 1 and 2, which proscribed the use of force. (See Vol. 3, Appendix D.)
2. The question mark appears in the original. According to the context, the text should read "now" instead of "not."

192. Y. Shimoni (Washington) to J. Herzog. 30 April 1953

Copy: 93.08/355/28

Shimoni responds to several issues raised during the Foreign Ministry consultations on 3 February concerning the Government's policy towards the Arab in Israel:

(1) In his opinion, the time has come to abandon the inflexible linkage between peace and a solution of the refugee problem. He proposes adopting a policy whereby Israel is willing to open discussions and even conclude a separate agreement concerning the refugees before a final peace agreement is achieved. This stance would make Israel's life easier, both in the Arab world and in the West.

(2) Like the other participants in the consultation, he supports the establishment of a refugee compensation fund, even if only on paper and for show. He recommends that an appropriation for this be included in the

State Budget. The creation of the fund would not constitute a financial strain, since in any case no money would be withdrawn until a final agreement is reached; in the meantime, it would constitute a positive gesture.

(3) The conclusion reached at the meeting, namely, that information activity aimed at the Arabs should be reinforced, is self-evident. But Shimoni believes that the campaign must be somewhat more candid and realistic, always conscious of the Arabs as human beings and of their normal human reactions.

(4) Even more important than sincere and humane propaganda is the question of coordination among the various government agencies and ministries. Shimoni lists several examples of lack of coordination among agencies, which ought to have been avoided; he contends that this is one of the weak spots of Israel's Arab policy.

(5) He recommends encouraging an active and independent leadership among Israeli Arabs. Taking into account both domestic and foreign-policy considerations, it would be wise to promote loyal and talented Arabs who can assume responsible positions in government.

(6) Shimoni adds that, in his opinion, the Israeli authorities do not always uphold the principles of democracy, equality, and tolerance in their day-to-day treatment of the country's Arab residents. He admits that he cannot substantiate this feeling with concrete examples, but neither can ignore it or conceal it from his colleagues. He understands the importance of security considerations. Nevertheless, he feels that not enough is being done to apply the principles of democracy and equality to the Arabs of Israel.

Notes

1. The meeting took place on 2 March. The report, signed by Herzog and dated 15 March 1953, is in File 130.02/2402/23.
2. See the memorandum on "The Condition of the Arab Refugees in Israel and their Problems," which Dotan sent to the head of the International Organizations Department, 9 November 1952, 130.02/2406/17. A. Dotan drew up the document in his capacity as coordinator of interministerial action and chairman of the advisory committee on refugee affairs, established on 4 July 1952. The committee was set up after the United Nations Relief and Works Agency wound up its work in Israel and responsibility for dealing with the refugees was transferred to government institutions.
3. Several lines have been omitted here.

193. D. Ben-Gurion [Tel Aviv]: Diary Note. 30 April 1953

IMDEA

Ben-Gurion summarizes a consultation held in advance of Dulles's visit. He did not accept Eytan's idea of proposing, through Dulles, that the Arabs sign a non-aggression pact as a step towards peace, of declaring Israel's readiness to help settle the refugees in Arab countries, and of demanding cancellation of the Arab boycott. In Ben-Gurion's opinion, non-aggression is part of the armistice agreements and a pact would add nothing new. Likewise, it is not a good idea to discuss Arab-Israel peace with Dulles: if the Arabs agree to peace, they will present this as a concession on their part and Israel will have to pay for peace itself. Ben-Gurion suggested raising two issues with Dulles: (1) Israel: Stress that Israel is a Western rather than a Levantine state, differing from all other countries in the area in respect of its regime, level of development, and attitude to world problems. Israel would fight any Communist aggression and shore up democracy at any cost. Its relations with America are not conditional on its relations with neighboring countries. Israel's major problems are economic independence and security. Hence Israel seeks to strengthen its economic and military potential. (2) The Middle East: The stability of the region depends on an improvement in the cultural and economic situation of the peoples who live there. This requires an end to the arms race between Israel and the Arab nations and its replacement by economic and cultural cooperation. Israel would propose the following to the Arabs: (a) cessation of all hostile acts, whether political, economic, or military; (b) economic and cultural cooperation. (3) Israel's financial participation in the resettlement of the refugees in Arab countries.[1]

Notes

1. The following participated in the consultation: Ben-Gurion, Eshkol, Eytan, Shiloah, Comay, Katriel Katz, Bendor, Kollek, Peres, Dayan, and Meir Sherman. (See the summary of the discussion, United States Division to Abba Eban and others, 4 May 1953, 93.03/117/7.)
2. Eytan brought with him a summary of the internal discussions in the Foreign Ministry. Apart from the points listed below, he proposed that Israel announce its readiness to cooperate with the Arab countries in seeking a solution to regional water problems and that, should the Arabs refuse, Israel implement its own plans as it saw fit. He also suggested asking the Americans to bolster Israel, as a democratic country willing to defend its regime (ibid.).
3. Dayan and Shiloah, too, were opposed to a non-aggression pact (ibid.).

4. Eytan sent a summary of the discussion to Sharett, Eban, Elath, and Fischer, and instructed them to use it in their information efforts in advance of Dulles's planned visit (Eytan to Israel missions, telegram MTA72, 1 May 1953, 130.09/2377/1).

194. Sh. Divon (Paris) to R. Shiloah. 1 May 1953

Copy: 130.15/3744/1

Divon reports on a conversation with Iḥsan 'Abd el-Qudūs[1] in Paris. (1) Qudūs related that 'Ali Māhir had informed him of the Israeli approach to the Egyptian embassy in Paris on 22 August 1952[2] and had also relayed the message to Naguib. Naguib had convened a plenary meeting of the Revolutionary Command Council, with Qudūs's participation. The Council discussed the fundamental question as to whether Egypt has a vital interest in negotiations with Israel and whether this interest justifies the domestic and external complications bound to arise should it undertake them. The consensus was that the time is not yet ripe; there is no need to endanger Egypt's domestic stability and its relations with the other Arab countries. The Council decided to give an evasive answer. 'Ali Māhir informed the U.S. ambassador as follows: The Egyptian government had received a communication from the Government of Israel, proposing negotiations on a settlement between the two countries. In view of the fact that there were no relations between the two states, the Egyptian government wished to inform the U.S. ambassador that the UN resolutions were the sole basis for negotiations. Because of rumors about Israel-Egypt talks and the possibility that Israel would make the matter public, thereby provoking questions from the Arab states, Qudūs was instructed to write the article in *Al Masri* reporting on the Israeli overtures.

(2) As for German reparations to Israel, most Council members believed that any damage nullification of the agreement might cause Israel was not worth the loss to the Egyptian economy from a boycott of Germany. Outwardly they said what they did, but the Council had resolved not to fight the agreement seriously.

(3) The Egyptians do not wish to make their membership in the Middle East Command conditional on evacuation of the Canal. Their demand for evacuation is sincere and profound. British maneuvers to isolate Egypt have forced the Egyptians to extol the Arab collective security pact as a means to strengthen them vis-à-vis the British. Most of the officers on the Council entertain no illusions about the effectiveness and advantage that would accrue to Egypt from excessively close relations with Arab countries. Divon notes that on this point Qudūs's description should be treated with caution, since he may be presenting his own personal views.

(4) The Americans are extremely interested in winning over the Egyp-

tians; it is the Egyptians' impression that eventually they will be able to obtain considerable economic and military assistance from the United States.

(5) During the talks on evacuating the Canal, some Britons had hinted to the Egyptians that, in the absence of an effective base for an adequate British force in the Canal Zone, the Israelis might take advantage of the opportunity and stab Egypt in the back. Insofar as the Gaza Strip may be raised in future negotiations, there is a growing inclination to consider it an area that is not vital to Egypt.

(6) Qudūs said candidly that for Egypt the pressing problem is freeing itself from foreign occupation. Solution of the Palestine problem is not one of its vital interests. As long as the Council does not believe this to be of supreme importance and that a settlement with Israel would be greatly to Egypt's advantage, there will be no inclination to enter serious negotiations with Israel, for fear that the fact would leak out and cause many problems. The Egyptians must be convinced in advance that talks would produce favorable results. As long as this is not the case, it will be difficult to open negotiations with Israel.

Divon explained Israel's position. Qudūs said that he would report to Naguib and Nasser; if they agree, he is willing to come to Paris to continue exploratory talks aimed at clarifying Egyptian and Israeli interests and examining the possibilities of a settlement. Divon said that he would be pleased were a member of the Council to be present at such talks.

Notes

1. An Egyptian journalist.
2. See Vol. 7, Nos. 310 and 312.
3. See Vol. 7, No. 81.

195. Meeting between the Delegations of Israel and Syria (Benot Yaaqov Bridge, 4 May 1953)[1]

130.02/2434/4

Gaon reports that Lt. Col. Shatīlah came without Col. Jadid, the chief of the Syrian delegation thus far, who has evidently has been relieved of this assignment.[2] It seemed clear from Shatīlah's statements that he had instructions to conclude the talks with an agreement, which would follow, with slight modifications, the general lines sketched out at the preceding session.[3] The introduction of Israel's additional proposals[4] upset him; he said that the closer an agreement, the more complicated matters became.

According to Gaon, Shatīlah's reactions do not determine or reflect official Syrian opinion. It may be inferred from his remarks that he had not received instructions to place special emphasis on the problem of water. Vigier asked Gaon not to raise the water issue, but Gaon explained that the situation on the ground is dynamic and the points involved should be settled. Shatīlah was taken aback by the participation of a Foreign Ministry representative; it was agreed that next time Israel would provide Syria with advance notification of such an intention.

Discussion of concrete issues: (1) A permanent but limited water supply to Buteiha: During the course of the talks the Syrians attempted to eliminate the concept of limited use of defined quantities of water from the Jordan, and especially the formula of a 10% increase over current consumption. Shatīlah did not insist on this after the necessity of predefining the quantity was explained to him. Israel proposed that a technical commission determine the quantity. (2) The area north of Darbashiya: (a) The Syrians wished to clarify the possibility that Arab farmers in adjacent areas could pump water from the Hula. Shatīlah accepted the explanation that the water has already receded from the armistice line, which it is forbidden to cross, and did not request that Israel grant special rights after the Israeli representative explained that a marshy strip prevents access to the water. (b) The Israeli delegation drew the proposed demarcation line of this zone and stated the region's purposes. It was made clear that it is out of the question for an Israeli settlement to find itself on the Syrian side of the new line. The Syrians requested the precise location of the settlement and declared that they have no intention of demanding that Israel hand it over; they would be satisfied with a line that runs south of it. (c) A lengthy debate focused on the question of who should receive compensation, and for what. Shatīlah made contradictory statements. The Israelis defined the "compensation area" as a function of Arab residents who would leave their lands in Israeli hands and move to the Syrian side; hence demarcation of its boundaries is not final. The issue remained unresolved. The Syrian representative declared this his country would be willing to accept any Arab who might desire to cross over to its side. (d) The Israeli delegation mentioned the Lowdermilk plan for utilization of the Jordan waters. These plans include construction of one or more dams to impound the winter floodwaters in irrigation reservoirs. Israel desires to reserve the possibility of implementing these plans at some future juncture. Since such reservoirs would cause flooding on the east bank, Israel proposes drawing the new armistice line one meter farther east. Israel is prepared to compensate landowners in the area. Shatīlah responded that this is a completely new proposal and endangers the continuation of discussions and Israel-Syrian relations in general. He compared this plan to the reclamation of the Hula and recalled the incidents of 1951. Construction of dams would entail work on the eastern bank, to which Syria was opposed. It would run counter to the

Security Council resolution prohibiting work on Arab lands. He stated that he would present this new proposal to his government for a decision. (3) The northern zone: The Israeli delegation pointed out that the issue of water rights in this zone had not yet been raised. It is important to Israel to ensure the Banias waters at 320 meters above sea level. The proposal is to divide the zone according to the area tilled, along a line running from east to west instead of north to south. Shatīlah saw military connotations in this proposal. Occupation of the northern zone by Israel would constitute a threat to the strategically important Banias-Quneitra-Beirut road. In addition, the proximity of the new line to the village of Banias would endanger its inhabitants. Furthermore, one could not expect the farmers to cross the Banias valley in order to reach their fields. Shatīlah proposed a compromise: a north-south line that would have the Banias enter Israeli territory at an elevation of 250 meters. The Israeli delegation replied that Israel would accept a solution leaving it with the Banias at an elevation of 320 meters and territory of equal area to the cultivated land currently under its control.

In informal talks, Gaon explained to Shatīlah some of the issues raised during the meeting. Gaon concludes his report by noting the Israeli proposals had astonished his opposite number and led to suspension of the session. Shatīlah announced that the Syrian reply will be forthcoming at the next meeting, scheduled for 13 May.[5]

Notes

1. Date of document: 10 May 1953.
2. The list of participants is omitted here. The Israelis were Gaon and Reichman, representing the IDF, and Yosef Tekoah of the Foreign Ministry. The Syrians were represented by three army officers—Shatīlah, Jamil Fuad, and Adham Burham. The UN representatives were Henri Vigier (chairman) and William Riley.
3. See No. 169.
4. The proposals are detailed as part of the presentation of the issues, under (2)(b) and (2)(c). They were drafted in accordance with a Government decision and the instructions as to the position to be adopted by the Israeli delegation, which appear above in No. 190.
5. The appendix has been omitted here. It quotes part of a paragraph included in the appendix to the exchange of letters between the British and French governments (7 March 1923), which set the international frontier between Palestine and Syria as follows: "The frontier follows a line on the shore parallel to and at 10 metres from the edge of Lake Tiberias, following any alteration of level consequent on the rising of its waters owing to the construction of a dam on the Jordan south of Lake Tiberias" (a copy of the document is in File 130.02/2425/6. Text of the agreement: Cmd. 1910).
6. The meeting took place on 27 May. See No. 234.

196. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 5 May 1953

Coded Tel.: WIA176; Outg.: 93.01/2209/3

In anticipation of Dulles's visit, Eban transmits the suggestions of the Israel delegation: (1) Regional peace: The Prime Minister should clarify at the outset whether, during his visit to Cairo, Dulles had found Naguib inclined to negotiate peace with Israel. If the answer is in the affirmative, he should stress Israel's willingness to hold talks at any time and place. If the answer is in the negative, their discussion should focus on steps that promote peace, such as a lifting of the Arab boycott, Israeli assistance in the resettlement of refugees, an end to acrimonious debates, and prevention of border clashes. It is important to reiterate the Israeli view that the role of the United States in the peace process is to help bring the parties together and to press for peace, but without predetermining the conditions and elements of a settlement. (2) Military aid: The options for immediate action, unconnected to regional plans, which are far from implementation, must be underscored. It should be stated that Israel has no illusions about the new international situation and counsels that the Free World be on the alert for all possible developments. Any progress in the Suez Canal negotiations will require strengthening the northern tier of the region, since there would be a weakening of the Canal Zone itself. (3) Buttressing the Israeli economy: A separate meeting should be held with Stassen to discuss Israel's burdensome debt and request his assistance with influential members of the Administration. (4) Refugees: Israel should express its astonishment that the Arabs are being allowed to squander the international aid without permanently resettling the refugees. It must be emphasized that Israel has absorbed 750,000 refugees; how is it possible that the affluent Arab east has not absorbed refugees?

Eban asks that Israel refrain from overloading the talks with too many topics and stick to the main issues he raises. The talks with Dulles should not be viewed as a substitute for regular and ongoing diplomatic relations. He proposes that neither the grant-in-aid for 1954 nor the Middle East defense organization be discussed.

Eban suggests that the press be urged to publish articles sympathetic towards Dulles, stressing his staunch refusal to be swayed by the propaganda advocating cooler relations with Israel, which has recently been spread in the United States. He also suggests arranging a visit by Byroade to a military base.

Note

1. See No. 206.

197. A. Eban to W. Eytan. 6 May 1953

Notes

1. See No. 165 (Editorial Note).
2. For Levavi's attitude throughout the affair, see his memorandum to Sharett, 4 May 1953, 130.11/2511/9.
3. See No. 154 (Editorial Note).
4. See the summary of the consultation held by the Israel delegation to the United Nations, 5 April 1953, 130.11/2492/19.
5. Here and below (12 April), Eban is referring to the speeches of 13 and 16 April.

198. A. Lourie to M. Sharett. 6 May 1953

Notes

1. The meeting took place on 9 April. Byroade, still bothered by the misunderstanding that had marred his talk with Sharett on the previous day, repeated the clarification he had made to Eban (see No. 159 and n. 3 there). He again explained to Goldmann that he and Sharett had different approaches to the peace process. Whereas Sharett believed that the United States should exert its influence on the Arabs to get them to meet with Israel and then allow the parties to talk to each other, without raising its own proposals, Byroade believed that the Arabs would not open talks without a prior agreement concerning conditions. (For further details of the meeting, see the summary that Lourie sent to Eban, 28 April 1953, 93.08/358/2; see also Eban to the Foreign Ministry, 11 May 1953, 130.20/2460/6.)
2. For details on Goldmann's meeting with Acheson in 1946, see Yehoshua Freundlich, *From Destruction to Resurrection* [Hebrew], (Tel Aviv, 1994), pp. 49–51.

199. A. Eban to the United States Division. 6 May 1953

Notes

1. See No. 193, n. 4.
2. See No. 159 and n. 3 there.
3. For a more complete report on the talk, see Goitein to the United States Division, 7 May 1953, 130.20/2460/6; see also Eban's telegram to the United States Division, 7 May 1953, 93.01/2209/3.

200. E. Elath to M. Comay. 7 May 1953

Notes

1. See Elath to Comay, telegram 98, 7 May 1953, 93.04/41/4.
2. In File 93.04/41/4. See also No. 175.
3. See Comay's reply to the letter, 12 May 1953, in the same file.

201. J. Tsur (Buenos Aires) to the Latin America Division. 8 May 1953

Orig.: 130.12/2571/2

Tsur reports on Sharett's 20-day visit to South America. He writes that the tour had a Jewish aspect integrated into its general diplomatic nature. It was not merely a visit by the Foreign Minister, but first and foremost a meeting between a Jewish minister and Jewish colonies in the Diaspora. This is how local leaders saw it and how Sharett was received by the Jews. According to Tsur, the visit raised the stature of local Jews. They welcomed Sharett with unprecedented enthusiasm, both because of the absolute identification with Israel, characteristic of Jews in South America, and also because of the minister's manner. Sharett did not exhibit the arrogance typical of Israeli representatives and highlighted his solicitude for and understanding of the problems of the local community.

The tasks before him were as follows: (1) strengthening the ties developed in recent years with South American governments, making them more familiar with Israel's problems, and demonstrating Israel's appreciation for their friendship; (2) attempting to find a political basis for the vital link between Israel and the Diaspora; (3) making a direct contribution to the success of the United Israel Appeal and give renewed momentum to Zionist information campaigns.

On this last front, Sharett had great success; he was able to restore the UIA to its status as a national political tool. Tsur is not confident that the financial results will be immediate, but the heads of the UIA in Argentina are confident that they can increase contributions take by 50 percent, while in Uruguay and Chile the campaign kicked off in a fashion unprecedented in recent years. (More than \$100,000 was raised in Santiago; in Montevideo, the Minister was presented with a check for \$100,000 even before the drive got under way.) Tsur writes that there is no doubt that the community is evincing a willingness to contribute. The spirit of voluntarism, weakened in recent years after the great enthusiasm of the establishment of the state, has returned.

Sharett visited Argentina during a tense period when cracks appeared in the Perón regime. His first meeting with Perón took place the day after a large demonstration outside Government House, marked by an explosions, after which the crowd streamed off to set fire to the centers of opposition. After a night of fear it was learned that the mob had headed for Jewish neighborhoods but had been turned back by the police. There was a rumor in the community that it was Sharett's presence that saved the Jews of Buenos Aires from the mob. This feeling further intensified the Jewish masses' feelings of being dependent on the strength and status of the State of Israel.

In his meeting with Perón, Sharett commented favorably on the fact that Jews in Argentina are allowed to develop their communal life freely and that the government fosters and understands their loyalty to Israel. Sharett expressed satisfaction at the existence of a three-fold harmony: between the government of Argentina and its Jewish citizens, between the Jews of Argentina and Israel, and between the government of Argentina and the government of Israel. Sharett repeated this formula to the presidents and foreign ministers of Chile and Uruguay.

Tsur adds that the UIA, which operates in Argentina illegally and is not officially recognized, was greatly strengthened by Sharett's talks with ministers who are members of the economic council and by his last meeting with Perón.[3] At these meetings, the problem of using the assistance funds raised in Argentina was raised openly. It was even promised that suitable arrangements would be made to transfer the funds as part of the commercial relations between Israel and Argentina.

If there are no grave shocks in the Argentinian regime, Tsur finds it hard to imagine that the government will take any action in the future against the UIA and Zionist freedom of action. In the talks between Sharett and Perón, various problems of concern to Israel were raised, including commercial ties between the countries, the status of the Jews in Argentina, and cooperation between Israel and Argentina in the international arena. In his meetings with Foreign Minister Remorino, Sharett raised the problem of Jerusalem, the problem of the refugees, and the transfer of the Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem. Although no promises were made to Sharett, Tsur believes that the talks helped create an air of goodwill in the Argentinian foreign ministry that will facilitate the legation's work in the future.

Even though the official ceremonies were affected by the circumstances of the period of Sharett's visit, these problems were not visible on the outside. The press devoted much space to the visit; during the ceremonies, Jewish participation and enthusiasm made up for what was lacking in the ceremony itself.

Compared to Argentina, Chile and Uruguay received Sharett in a quieter, less frenetic atmosphere and with great warmth. The ceremonies in Sharett's honor in Chile were extremely pleasant. The minister's visit made

a great impression and was the talk of the day. Even though specific political problems were not discussed, because there are no disputes between Israel and Chile, Tsur believes that Israel will benefit from the visit.

In Uruguay, Sharett had several meetings with the foreign minister, and was shown great respect at every reception. In both Uruguay and Chile the Jewish community participated and contributed to the atmosphere of the visit.

Notes

1. See No. 170 (Editorial Note).
2. On 16 April.
3. For more details on the talks, see Tsur's telegrams to the Foreign Ministry, 23 and 30 April 1953, 130.09/2294/4.
4. For further details on the visit, see File 130.12/2571/2.

202. E. Sasson (Rome) to W. Eytan. 10 May 1953

Copy: 130.02/2474/4

Sasson believes that, in their talks with Dulles, the Arabs will attempt to explain the importance of the Arab collective security pact for defense of the Arab states and will request extensive economic and military support to equip them for operations alongside the West, in time of need. They will almost certainly promise Dulles that, when the collective security pact is in place, the Arab countries, acting as a unified bloc with regard to regional defense and with a coordinated foreign policy, will be prepared to negotiate with the Western Powers concerning joint defense of the Middle East. Sasson is certain that the Arabs will raise with Dulles the issues of British evacuation of the Canal Zone, border rectification, and the refugees, and will press for their preferred solutions. But it must not be assumed that they will make the attainment of these solutions a precondition for the establishment and implementation of the collective security pact. The Arabs, who view Dulles's visit as a one-time opportunity, will seek to derive maximum benefit from it, both in economic and military aid and in moral and political support for their disputes with Britain, France, and Israel. Sasson believes that, if his assessment is correct, the situation is not detrimental to Israel, since the establishment of a Middle East defense organization would be deferred and Israel would find in Dulles a receptive audience for its military requests. Furthermore, such an Arab stance would lessen American pressure on Israel with regard to borders and the refugees. Sasson proposes presenting the issue of peace with the Arabs to Dulles not

as a vital Israeli interest but rather as a necessary element for the stability of the Middle East.

203. Ch. Gaon [Tel Aviv] to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 10 May 1953

Copy: 130.02/2428/4

Gaon discusses the mixed armistice commissions and relations with the Arab states:

I: The armistice commissions

(A) The armistice commissions have become a useless instrument that cannot resolve the recurrent practical problems involving Israel and the Arab states. On the contrary, they delay and side-track any action that could improve the situation. Israel derives no benefit from their operation. (B) The commissions' routine and sterile discussions sometimes lead to results antithetical to Israel's interests. At times the commissions' activities are exploited for propaganda purposes. (C) The main unresolved problems, such as the demilitarized zone, Jerusalem, free passage through the Suez Canal, and so on, will be resolved outside the setting of the commissions. (D) The only benefit that can be derived from the armistice commissions is direct contact with representatives of an Arab government and intensive utilization of the possibilities inherent in such contact. Israeli policy is to limit the commissions' official activities but keep them alive as a place for open encounters.

II. Ongoing problems with the Arab countries

(A) Lebanon: (1) The Israel-Lebanon commission spends most of its time trying to solve police problems in the border region. This is done at unofficial meetings. Israel has adopted a conciliatory line towards the commission, so as to present the possibility of normal relations with a neighboring Arab state. The idea is to drive a wedge between the Arab countries by displaying a different attitude towards one of them and also to benefit from the genial situation created thereby. (2) Relations with Lebanon have worsened recently, due to incitement by other Arab countries (chiefly Syria). Lebanon is attempting to exploit the previous good relations while at the same time appearing to follow the line of other Arab states.

(B) Syria: The demilitarized zone is the key to relations with Syria in the Armistice Commission. Syrian sensitivity stems from the fact that over the years Israel has expanded its control of the zone and is exercising sovereignty there. Syria's current willingness to discuss modification of the armistice line, in terms of partition of the demilitarized zone, derives from its desire: (1) to prevent further Israel encroachment; (2) to acquire villages

and their population, along with extensive territory, beyond the Syrian border; (3) to display to its citizens an achievement by the regime; (4) to demonstrate to the Powers, especially the United States, moderation and an interest in peace, with a view to obtaining financial assistance; (5) to enable construction of a power plant in the al-Hamma salient, in accordance with the Yarmuk plan and with American technical assistance.

(C) Jordan: (1) The hard life of the Jordanian population living near the long border with Israel, as well as the instability of its shaky regime, has led to extensive infiltration into Israel for the purposes of looting, with attendant sabotage and murder. In the absence of any Jordanian effort to impose order, the full burden of self-defense falls on Israel. The Powers, too, are unwilling to exert direct pressure on Jordan, since this runs counter to their own interests. (2) In keeping with the rising tide of Arab demands, Jordan is increasing its own claims, especially with regard to Mount Scopus. Despite fear of Israel's strength, Jordan throws out challenges, relying on the support of the Arab countries, Britain, and the other Powers, and on the assumption that the United States will curb Israeli reactions.

(D) Egypt: (1) As long as Egypt remains preoccupied with its domestic affairs, it will display no initiative in the Mixed Armistice Commission. It takes pains to manifest a cordial attitude, with the aim of postponing any practical action to some hazy future. Israeli proposals intended to exploit the change in the Egyptian regime have been left pending. (2) The Egyptian military is trying to resolve the only current problem likely to worsen Egypt-Israel relations—infiltration from the Gaza District. (3) A quiet and clandestine contest is under way to gain control over the Nizzana demilitarized zone. The Egyptians have the upper hand, because they can exploit the presence in the area of armed Egyptian Bedouins. In the absence of a substantial foothold, Israel's hands are tied; it can only insist on its rights under the armistice agreement.

III. Relations with Arab representatives

(A) The Arab countries have denied their representatives on the armistice commissions any freedom of initiative. They may not react to any new situation or event; in such cases they are required to consult with their governments and receive appropriate instructions. They display no desire to resolve problems. Most of the representatives manifest a cordial personal attitude that has no positive value. (B) The frequent consultations among the Arab delegations to the armistice commissions have entrenched their positions and led to coordinated action, making the situation more difficult for Israel. They do not follow this joint policy tenaciously; when an issue has special relevance to a particular Arab state it deviates from the general line.

In conclusion, the armistice regime has enabled the Arab countries to overcome their military shortcomings and rally their forces. They have

been reinvigorated and are adopting a tough position. The armistice agreements have not brought peace any closer.

Notes

1. See No. 139 and n. 1 there.
2. The last sentence was added by hand.

204. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 11 May 1953

Coded Tel.: WIA208; Outg.: 93.01/2209/3

Eban adds his comments about Dulles's anticipated visit:

(1) The visit is meant to demonstrate the Administration's interest in all countries of the Free World, unlike the previous Administration, which had been criticized for its excessive concentration on Europe. In addition to this public relations objective, the Secretary of State will use the opportunity to listen, but he is unlikely to offer much in the way of his own reactions or comments.

(2) Dulles will not present a peace plan of his own, nor will he undertake to support any claim or request. All members of the delegation have received firm instructions not to express agreement or opposition to anything the Arabs or Israel may say about the conditions for peace. Dulles will express the United States' wish that peace be established and that the parties address their claims and conditions to each other. On the other hand, he hopes that his visit will stimulate both sides to think aloud about the conditions for peace and thereby give a push to the process of deliberation and discussion. During the past week, Arab-Israeli peace has lost its primacy in Dulles's scale of priorities, replaced by the crisis between Great Britain and Egypt.

(3) The State Department is slowly realizing that the Arabs have deep-seated reservations about any significant assistance to Western defense and are quite apathetic to the West's attempts to curtail the spread of Communism. Though there is a certain disappointment with Naguib, he has not yet lost the sympathy of the West.

(4) In such conditions, the Americans may be receptive to suggestions for maximum cooperation with Israel through development and expansion of the existing network of mutual ties, without waiting for special regional arrangements. Effective arguments in this direction will fall on fertile ground. Dulles must be cautioned against the Arabs' advocacy of the Arab League pact as an alternative to a regional defense alliance.

(5) Since the Suez Canal issue is not advancing towards a comprehensive

solution, the problem of free passage for Israeli shipping must be raised as a separate issue to be resolved in the context of the armistice agreements and Security Council resolutions.

(6) Israel has not succeeded in conveying an accurate assessment of the situation on the borders; it is worthwhile making a special effort on this issue.

(7) In the expected meeting with Stassen, Israel must explain that, in the absence of additional special aid in the coming fiscal year, the new grant-in-aid will not solve its external debt problem.

(8) Dulles and his party must be forewarned and rendered immune to the wild defamation they will hear in the Arab capitals. Israel should propose that the members of the delegation contact the Embassy in Washington concerning any unsympathetic opinions they hear after leaving Israel. Israel must hint gently that American diplomats in other Middle Eastern capitals are apt to be overly impressed by Arab arguments; Israel hopes that all American representatives in the region will join hands in a concerted venture to persuade the Arabs that peace is essential and can be obtained only through open contact with Israel, without preconditions.

(9) The impression must be given that Israel, along with Turkey, is virtually the only bastion of political maturity and support for the West in a region riddled with extremism and fanaticism.

Note

1. See No. 206.

205. R. Shiloah [Tel Aviv] to M. Sharett. 13 May 1953

Copy: 130.02/4373/15

Shiloah summarizes contacts with Egypt, beginning with Sadiq's statement in late January,[1] continuing with Divon's reply,[2] and running through the most recent meeting between Sadiq and Divon, on 13 May 1953. At this meeting, Sadiq delivered the letter he had received from Nasser in reply to Israel's statement. The letter reads as follows:

> (1) The Government of Israel must appreciate and understand the position of the Government of Egypt from the point of view of Egyptian public opinion and the other Arab governments. Hence Egypt must develop its policies towards Israel in stages, so that together we can achieve the maximum possible results. (2) In the existing situation we prefer a policy of refraining from hostile anti-Israel declarations, as a first step in this direction. (3) I repeat my promise that we have no

aggressive intentions towards Israel; I am pleased that the Government of Israel has accepted our words on a basis of mutual trust. (4) The Government of Egypt is fully aware of Israel's influence in American circles and expects Israel, at this decisive period in Egypt's history, to exert its influence so as to second and reinforce Egyptian demands in the press and official circles. Concrete proof of such assistance would considerably facilitate our task of reaching a final settlement in our relations with Israel and of exploiting our influence in Arab circles to this end. (5) Concerning Israel's willingness to purchase quantities of cotton, with all due gratitude and respect for this proposal the time is not yet ripe to implement it. We would rather receive clear explanations about the type and amount of official and unofficial American economic aid and the means of obtaining such aid before going into details. (6) On the other hand, and in order to manifest our good will, we shall seriously examine the issue of the passage of ships. In any case we have already eased the restrictions in this matter.

Shiloah adds that he does not accept Sadiq's explanation of a delay in the mail. He believes that the delivery of Nasser's response during Dulles's visit to Israel is no coincidence, but is meant to moderate the tone of Israeli statements during the talks with the Secretary of State.

Notes

1. The text of the statement and Sadiq's reaction have been omitted here; they appear in No. 47.
2. The text of Divon's reply has been omitted here ; it appears in No. 70.
3. See Ben-Gurion's response to the Egyptian feeler, No. 217, and Israel's draft reply, No. 229 (appendix). See also No. 215 and Rafael to Eban, 14 May 1953, 130.15/3744/1.

206. Editorial Note

Visit to Israel by John Foster Dulles, 13–14 May 1953

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles visited Israel on 13–14 May, accompanied by the director of the Mutual Security Agency, Harold Stassen, and a nine-person entourage. The visit was part of the Secretary's Middle East tour, which lasted from 11 to 19 May and took him to seven countries—Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia—followed by visits to India, Pakistan, and Turkey on 20–27 May. This was the first visit ever by a U.S. Secretary of State to Israel and some of the other countries. On his talks in Israel, see Nos. 207–209 and 211–213. On his talks in other countries, see *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1–154.

207. Meeting: M. Sharett and Senior Officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs–J. F. Dulles and the U.S. Delegation. 13 May 1953

Notes

1. See No. 127 and n. 3 there, and Nos. 146 and 182.
2. The reference is to the Security Council resolution of 1 September 1951; see Vol. 6, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, p. 257.
3. On the talks conducted by Dulles and his entourage in Egypt, see *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 3–25.
4. Compare report on the meeting in *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 29–32.

208. Meeting: W. Eytan and L. Kohn–Members of U.S. Delegation. 13 May 1953

Notes

1. The reference is to Israel's proposal, made during the Lausanne conference in July 1949, to admit 100,000 Arab refugees after the establishment of peace with its neighbors. See Vol. 4: Introduction, Companion Volume, pp. xviii–xx; ibid., Editorial Note, Companion Volume, p. 206; and ibid., No. 124.
2. See No. 77 and n. 3 there, and No. 85, n. 2.

209. Meeting at Dinner of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Finance, and Interior, and Senior Officials with J. F. Dulles and the U.S. Delegation. 13 May 1953

Notes

1. On the day of Dulles's arrival in Cairo (11 May), Churchill opened the foreign-policy debate in the House of Commons. He called for a high-level conference of representatives of the Powers and emphasized the differences of opinion between the United States and Great Britain on international questions, in particular concerning relations with the Soviet Union. He reviewed the course of the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations at length. Speaking about Israel, he said that it was the most important factor in the Middle East, which had fortunately managed to develop the best army in the Levant and to repel the combined attack of its neighbors, including Egypt. He emphasized that Britain would honor its promises to Israel and would not allow the supply of aircraft to countries in the region to tip the balance against Israel. He expressed hope that the refugee problem would meet with the attention it merited and that relations between Israel and Jordan would improve. (See Information to Israel Missions Abroad, 25 May 1953, No. 669.) See also No. 222.

2. For details of the meeting, see *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 32–33.
3. See No. 207.
4. See No. 211.
5. See No. 159 and n. 3 there.

210. Meeting: R. Shiloah–D. MacArthur (Mr. Sharett's Home, Ramat Gan, 13 May 1953)

130.02/2414/29

MacArthur related his impressions of his visit to Egypt and meeting with Naguib. He said that Naguib is honest, benevolent, and extremely popular; he has managed to kindle a glimmer of enthusiasm and hope among the people. Nevertheless, he lacks the element of visionary and creative leadership. Moreover, Naguib is not the dominant ruler. He is held in check by the clique of officers who organized the revolution, which includes more forceful personalities than himself. MacArthur had been very impressed by Nasser. Nasser is dynamic, has a sharp mind, and is currently displaying flexibility and self-restraint; but he also evinces signs of extreme fanaticism. Should he be driven to despair he might prove dangerous. True, Naguib's group seized power under the slogans of reform, war against corruption, and a higher standard of living; but all these are being deferred until the main objective of the liberation movement—victory in the struggle with the British—has been achieved. MacArthur does not accept the hypothesis that the Egyptian leaders are deflecting the people's attention to foreign affairs because of their impotence and incompetence in domestic matters. The Egyptian people and leadership are consumed by an inferiority complex concerning the country's independence; until a suitable method of overcoming this complex is found, neither the leadership nor the people will be able to deal with any problem seriously. Statements by Egyptian leaders that they will be willing to make peace with Israel after the problem of the British evacuation has been solved struck him as sincere. Just sitting down to negotiate will involve a concession of sorts to Israel. Israel must find a way to satisfy Egypt's demand for an overland link with the other Arab countries. Shiloah notes that MacArthur did not use the term "territorial continuity." MacArthur said that the role of the United States in the Israel-Arab dispute resembles its role in other disputes in the democratic world, that is, to avoid adopting a one-sided position and to foster an atmosphere of mutual trust, persuading the parties to the conflict that an agreement would be to their advantage, and insisting that the United States is not interested in an agreement that comes at the expense of one of the parties. As for foreign aid, MacArthur believes that in the future the United States will offer only assistance considered to be essential to U.S.

interests. It will thoroughly check whether the aid is used to meet the needs of and in accordance with principles and methods acceptable to the United States. President Eisenhower is extremely interested in and concerned about the Middle East.

In its assessment of the foreign policy of the previous Democratic Administration, the new Administration found many policies it is prepared to continue; in other areas, however, it feels that a radical change is called for. Concerning the Middle East, the sense is that the Truman Administration lacked a "clear and consistent policy." Eisenhower concluded that he must have a clear and official policy on the Middle East. This spurred his decision to dispatch Dulles and Stassen on a Middle East tour, despite the difficulties caused by their absence from Washington at this time. MacArthur estimated that Eisenhower and the Administration will draw their conclusions and devise a Middle East policy within three to four months. MacArthur spoke sympathetically of Israel. He said that Israel is the only country in the Middle East that, instead of licking old wounds, is investing thought and effort in the solution of current problems and building for the future.

211. Meeting: D. Ben-Gurion and M. Sharett–J. F. Dulles and the U.S. Delegation. 14 May 1953

Notes

1. On the Ben-Gurion–Marshall meeting of 4 May 1951, see Vol. 6, No. 156.
2. See No. 207.
3. Compare the report on the meeting in *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 36–40.
4. The last paragraph, which deals with the presentation of bibles to Dulles and Stassen and the texts of the dedicatory inscriptions, has been omitted here.
5. See No. 212.
6. See No. 209, n. 1.

212. Meeting: The Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Finance, and Commerce and Industry, and Senior Officials–J. F. Dulles and the U.S. Delegation. 14 May 1953

Note

1. During his visit there during May–July 1952. See Vol. 7, No. 238, and Editorial Note, Companion Volume, pp. 154–55.

213. Meeting: President I. Ben-Zvi–J. F. Dulles, H. Stassen, and F. Russell. 14 May 1953

Notes

1. In his friendly letter, Eisenhower expressed his concern at the tension between Israel and its neighbors and stressed the urgent need for peace in the Middle East (8 May 1953, 130.02/2414/29; see in the same file Ben-Zvi's reply to Eisenhower, 19 May 1953).
2. See Nos. 207 and 211.

214. Sh. Rosenne [Tel Aviv] to W. Eytan. 14 May 1953

Memorandum: 130.02/2425/8

With Riley's tenure coming to an end, Rosenne reviews Israel's relations with the armistice commissions. Rosenne agrees with those who claim that they have long ceased to serve as mixed commissions supervising the agreements and have in fact turned into a species of police agency. This change in their function calls into question not only their objectives, but also the purpose of the armistice agreements. Rosenne argues that although the problem of infiltration is germane to the very existence of the armistice agreements, not every case of murder or theft should be brought before distinguished teams of military personnel from both sides and the United Nations. He proposes examining the extent to which Israel's policy of bringing each and every complaint before the armistice commissions has contributed to the deterioration in their status.

The hope that the armistice commissions would become a liaison between Israel and the Arab countries, or even serve as an alternative to diplomatic ties, has come to nought. The commissions have outlived their usefulness. Rosenne proposes investigating whether Israel's interest lies in their continued atrophy or in their restoration to their original status of 1949.

Note

1. Lt.-Gen. Riley completed his term as UNTSO Chief of Staff and chairman of the Mixed Armistice Commissions in June 1953.

215. G. Rafael (Paris) to M. Sharett. 14 May 1953

Copy: 130.15/3744/1

In the wake of the announcement by Nasser,[1] Rafael proposes the draft of a reply[2] and adds the following comments: (1) He attaches special importance to Nasser's announcement because of its form, content, and timing. This is the first time during this the period of feelers that the government of Egypt had notified the government of Israel of its desire to take steps to improve relations between the two countries, with the goal of attaining a final settlement. (2) In his opinion, this progress should be consolidated by a response at a high government level corresponding to Nasser's rank. Such a step would raise the ties with Egypt from the underground to the diplomatic theater. (3) Rafael asks Sharett to relate to his draft as a collection of options. The style, too, is not fixed. Rafael recommends an answer in Arabic or in French, or in both of them. (4) Rafael understands from Divon[3] that his contact is pressing for a speedy response in light of recent developments in Egypt.[4]

Notes

1. See No. 205.
2. The text of the draft has been omitted here, but can be found in the file; for Israel's reply, see No. 229 (appendix).
3. Rafael to Sharett, telegram 121, 14 May 1953, 130.09/2345/2.
4. The reference is apparently to difficulties that had surfaced in the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations, which led to an impasse in early May 1953; as well as to the British government's decision of 12 May to send naval commando units to the Suez Canal area to prevent attacks against British soldiers.

216. G. Avner and B. Razin (Sofia) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 14 May 1953

Coded Tel.: 64; Inc.: 130.09/2342/11

Avner provides further details of his talk with the Polish ambassador in Sofia.[1] The ambassador asked whether Israel would be willing to send a note to the Soviet Union and, if so, what its tenor would be. His intention was that, on the basis of an Israeli draft, he could ascertain the possibility of a guaranteed positive reply. The Polish ambassador had said that he was acting at his own initiative; and in the farewell talk with him it transpired that he really was not acting on behalf of the Soviets. Avner proposes draft-

ing a letter that would summarize the chain of events that led to the severance of relations with the Soviet Union and end with a condemnation of the Soviet government for its handling of the "Doctors' Plot." He requests instructions as to further action.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 183.
2. The reply was sent on 3 May. Razin was instructed to speak with the Polish ambassador before his departure and to inform him of the telegram sent by the American journalist Shapira, published in the world press, which predicted the renewal of relations between Israel and the Soviet Union (130.09/2341/7).
3. In his reply, the head of the Eastern Europe Division instructed Avner to speak with the Polish chargé d'affaires to ascertain whether he was aware of the Polish ambassador's proposal and whether the latter had instructed him to deal with Israel's draft letter. He was also told to clarify whether the ambassador had acted on his own initiative or according to instructions, and to extract some hint as to what the Soviet Union wished to read in Israel's letter (telegram from Eastern Europe Division to Avner, 17 May 1953, 130.11/2507/5).

   Avner and Razin met with the Polish chargé d'affaires on 19 May and informed him that the Israeli Foreign Ministry was inclined to accept the proposal concerning the letter, but would like to receive some indication of the desired content and wording, in order to ensure a positive reply. The chargé passed on this information to the Soviet ambassador in Sofia, who indicated that he would reply to Israel through the Polish representative, but that it would take some time. During the same meeting, it transpired that the proposal made by the Polish ambassador in Bulgaria to Razin had been his own personal initiative, with the knowledge of the Soviet ambassador in Sofia but not according to his explicit instructions (Avner and Razin to the Eastern Europe Division, telegram 67, 20 May 1953, 130.11/2507/5). See also No. 236.

217. D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to M. Sharett. 17 May 1953

Copy: 130.15/3735/6

In response to Shiloah's memorandum,[1] Ben-Gurion states that, in his opinion, the Egyptian position, as expressed by Sadiq, should be understood as follows: "We Egyptians will continue our [diplomatic] attacks against Israel, together with all the Arab peoples. Israel must prove its good will towards us by purchasing cotton and exerting its influence in the United States on Egypt's behalf." Ben-Gurion instructs that the following message be conveyed to Egypt: (1) Israel would be prepared to mobilize its political influence on the side of Egypt's claims in the Suez, but only in return for an explicit commitment to allow free passage through the Suez Canal of Israeli ships and ships en route to Israel. (2) As long as there is no

secure peace between Israel and Egypt, Israel will oppose all arms supplies to Egypt.

Note

1. See No. 205. Shiloah sent copies of the document to Ben-Gurion and Eytan.

218. Editorial Note

Submission of a Note from the U.S. Secretary of State to the Prime Minister of Israel, 18 May 1953

On 18 May, the chargé d'affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Israel presented the following note to Ben-Gurion. (Cf. *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1223–24.) For Ben-Gurion's reply, see No. 227.

219. *Aide-Mémoire* from the Secretary of State of the United States to the Prime Minister of Israel. 18 May 1953

Note

1. See No. 182. See also No. 65 and n. 3 there.

220. D. Goitein to W. Eytan (telegram). 19 May 1953

Notes

1. See No. 7.
2. Replying, Sharett instructed Goitein to inform the Burmese ambassador in the United States that Israel was disappointed by the delay. He was to add that the Israeli candidate for minister to Rangoon could not wait indefinitely and asked him to clarify how long Israel would have to wait (telegram IW334, 22 May 1953, 130.09/2309/13). The Burmese government's consent to the appointment of Israel's minister in Rangoon was not given until July 1953. The minister, David Hacohen, assumed his post in December of that year. See Nos. 604 and 616.

221. Meeting: M. Sharett–P. Gilbert (Tel Aviv, 19 May 1953)

130.02/2413/9

The French ambassador called on Sharett to clarify a number of points before leaving for a French diplomatic consultation. Gilbert received an account of the talks with Dulles and broached several matters:

(1) He requested official confirmation of the Prime Minister's statement promising a hundred years of stability were there peace with the Arabs; this would enable him to state at the consultation that Israel has no expansionist intentions. (2) The ambassador asked for confirmation of Israel's declared position on the Arab refugee problem, in particular that Israel is willing to pay compensation and opposes repatriation of the refugees. (3) He raised the issue of Jerusalem and admitted that France knows that the Foreign Ministry will be transferred to Jerusalem. (4) Gilbert emphasized the recent rapprochement between France and Turkey, noting that in the talks between Turkey and France, held in Paris, both parties had expressed strongly pro-Israel positions. France is willing to use its good relations with Turkey on Israel's behalf. (5) He requested Sharett's approval to inform the diplomatic consultation that Franco-Israeli agreements concerning the privileges of French institutions in Israel will be honored.

Notes

1. In reply to a question raised in the National Assembly, the French foreign minister explained that the French Government, despite its adherence in principle to the idea of internationalization of the Holy Places, had refrained from raising this issue at the General Assembly because there was no possibility of obtaining the requisite majority, as had been the case with the Belgian proposal of 15 December 1950. Until circumstances changed, France would direct its efforts towards guaranteeing free access to the Holy Places and preservation of the status quo regarding the rights of France and of the Catholic and Muslim countries. (For the text of the speech, see File 93.02/163/6.)
2. See Vol. 2, Editorial Note, pp. 395–96.
3. See No. 328 and n. 1 there.

222. E. Elath to M. Comay. 19 May 1953

Notes

1. See No. 209, n. 1.
2. See No. 206 (Editorial Note).

3. This was a short congratulatory note following Churchill's speech in the House of Commons (see [Sharett] to Elath, 27 May 1953, 130.02/2412/26).
4. In the end, Elath did not meet with Churchill and passed on Ben-Gurion's message in writing (see Elath to Comay, telegram LI911, 27 May 1953, 130.09/2319/5).
5. See No. 171.
6. In reply, Sharett told Elath that he agreed to raising the issue of the oil pipeline to Eilat once again and did not oppose mentioning the canal issue, "but it is better to do so offhandedly," as a possibility requiring further investigation (27 May 1953, 130.02/2412/26).

223. E. Sasson (Rome) to M. Sharett. 20 May 1953

Coded Tel.: MPR448; Inc.: 130.02/2453/20

Sasson suggests a reply to Nasser's letter,[1] assuming that the document is authentic. In his opinion the letter demonstrates that the Egyptians are aware that Israeli efforts in the United States are detrimental to Egyptian interests and are attempting to arrest this process without making any commitments towards Israel. Sasson believes that this is an opportune moment to press for a face-to-face meeting with one of their senior officials in an attempt to clarify several matters related to the prospects for a future settlement. He suggests not sending a written response, making no response to the specific issues raised by Nasser in his letter, and emphasizing that Israel views the current period as decisive for the Middle East and is bent on safeguarding its own interests. The Egyptians should be requested to dispatch a senior official to Paris to conduct free and nonbinding talks.

Note

1. See No. 205.

224. Meeting: M. Sharett–Sir Francis Evans. 21 May 1953

Notes

1. Date of document: 26 May 1953.
2. See No. 219.
3. That same day Sharett also met with the chargé d'affaires in the U.S. Embassy and conveyed the same message to him. Russell asked that Israel show restraint, at least until Dulles's return to the United States (see United States Division to the Israel Embassy in Washington, telegram IW332, 22 May 1953, 130.09/2309/13; cf. *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1224–25). The next day, Russell and Evans met and

agreed that the Israeli initiative stemmed from three needs: (1) genuine concern about the situation and, in particular, the road to Jerusalem; (2) the need to emphasize the importance of high-level meetings between Israeli and Jordanian representatives; (3) the need to influence Dulles's conclusions about the Israeli-Arab conflict. (See Evans to the Foreign Office, 22 May 1953, PRO, FO371/104781; compare the report by the British ambassador in Amman in his telegram to the Foreign Office, 23 May 1953, ibid.)

225. A. Eban (Washington) to W. Eytan. 22 May 1953

Coded Tel.: WIA251; Inc.: 93.01/2209/3

Eban summarizes the proposals raised at a meeting of the UN delegation that discussed strategies on the relocation of the Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem, with the aim of moderating the international reaction. The Government should publish a declaration in which it pledges to safeguard the Holy Places and maintain religious rights and expresses its willingness to cooperate on facilitating access between the sections of the divided city. It should be emphasized that the presence of government ministries has no effect on the status of the Holy Places; on the contrary, turning Jerusalem into a capital city gives it an international character. In addition to a Government communiqué along these lines, the delegation recommends briefing the press on several topics: (1) emphasizing that the UN has abandoned the idea of internationalization; (2) the position of Jordan, which retains control of the Holy Places; (3) underscoring the drastic changes that have taken place in Jerusalem since 1947.

Eban recommends briefing the American press and explaining that U.S. policy has traditionally opposed internationalization in all decisive votes, including the drafting of the proposed international constitution in 1950.

The delegation's assessment is that the Arabs are laying the groundwork for an offensive on this issue at the General Assembly, since they are likely to suffer diplomatic defeats on all other issues. On Jerusalem, however, they believe they have a better chance of establishing a broad front against Israel; Israel should be prepared to meet the assault.

Note

1. Of the UN General Assembly, i.e., the first session of the Seventh General Assembly, which convened in September 1953.

226. Meeting: D. Ben-Gurion–Sir Francis Evans. 23 May 1953

Notes

1. Date of the document: 27 May 1953.
2. See the appendix below. Another document was appended to Churchill's note, entitled "Alleged Israel Attacks on Jordàn Villages"; this has been omitted here. The document was a report on IDF raids during the night of 20–21 May on Jordanian border villages, in which civilians were killed.
3. See No. 224.
4. See No. 219.
5. See Ben-Gurion's reply to Churchill in No. 240.

227. *Aide-Mémoire* from the Prime Minister of Israel to the Secretary of State of the United States. 24 May 1953

Notes

1. The memorandum was sent to F. Russell, chargé d'affaires in the U.S. Embassy in Israel, by S. Bendor.
2. See No. 219.
3. See No. 146.
4. See No. 65 and n. 3 there, and No. 182.
5. On the dispatch of the document and the analysis of Israeli policy by Russell, see *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1227–31.

228. Editorial Note

Government Session on the Deteriorating Situation along the Border with Jordan, 24 May 1953

At a meeting of the Government on 24 May, Sharett reported on the deteriorating situation along the border with Jordan, in particular the incident along the Jerusalem–Tel Aviv road, on his meetings with Evans and Russell (No. 224 and n. 2 there), and on the notes from Dulles and Churchill (see Nos. 219 and 226). Ben-Gurion stressed the serious incident on the Jerusalem road; it was an act of war that must be riposted by "an act of belligerency." He made plain that should such actions continue there would be no alternative to retaliation. He proposed occupying certain locations, such as Tulkarm or Sheikh Jarrah, and holding them until guarantees were provided that such acts would not be repeated. Such an action might compli-

cate relations with the United States and Britain, but some things were more important than the friendship of the Powers. Were Israel to renounce Jerusalem, it would be jeopardizing its very independence. Since the Government did not meet every day, Ben-Gurion explained that he wanted to present his position to the ministers. Ben-Gurion criticized "our German-born Zionist colleagues" who believed that Russian Jews were not sufficiently pacifist. He wished to inform them that although he agreed that making peace with the Arabs was Israel's greatest political goal, the objective would not be attained if "we cease to exist."

Sharett said that although one must not disregard the ethical dimension, the problem was basically political, security, and military in nature. The question was not only what to do in a given situation, but also where a specific initiative was likely to lead. He favored evaluating situations according to their final outcome and would consider retaliatory action, as proposed by Ben-Gurion, only as a last resort. He was concerned that retaliation could lead to a renewal of hostilities. Sharett asked his colleagues whether Israel ought to become embroiled in a war at a time when the United States was likely to stand against it.

Peretz Bernstein opposed action of the type proposed by Ben-Gurion without further prior consultation with the Government.

Moshe Shapira emphasized that there was a consensus as to the importance of Jerusalem. He agreed that the incidents were very serious and even conjectured that the British were somehow involved. He was inclined to support a more forceful Israeli response, for example, paralyzing transport on a key artery, like the Tulkarm-Qalqiliya road. He too demanded that no action be decided upon without another Government debate.

Pinhas Rosen was hesitant about supporting a retaliatory action. He did not believe in the effectiveness of retaliation, though he understood the public's mood. He requested that the Government not be presented with a *fait accompli* and that a further consultation be held if it were decided to take military action.

Joseph Sapir suggested choosing an outpost that was not otherwise inhabited so as to avoid injuring civilians. He also expressed concern at the danger of American intervention. Hence he proposed waiting until after several more Arab raids and to refrain from reacting to each one separately. Sapir also asked that an additional cabinet meeting be held before concrete action was decided upon.

Dov Joseph said that Israel must put an end to Arab control of the Jerusalem road. It was inconceivable that the city's inhabitants could not travel in security on the road to the capital. He expressed concern that people would leave Jerusalem and opposed the proposal raised at the meeting that the ministers not travel to the city at night. Ben-Gurion also took umbrage at this proposal and threatened to resign if it were adopted.

Dov Joseph had no problem with the term "an act of belligerency." This

meant that there would be a planned operation rather than a guerrilla action by several young men. He described the public mood resulting from the lack of a military response. He proposed that the operation be mounted in the Jerusalem region and be carried out only after several more incidents and after Jordan had been warned of the consequences.

Bechor Shitrit argued that the Arab world would interpret restraint as weakness, whereas retaliation acted as a deterrent. He proposed establishing settlements and deploying troops along the road to Jerusalem road in order to secure it.

Israel Rokach wanted to know why the intelligence services could not provide an answer as to who was responsible for the Jordanians' actions. Was this a deliberate tactic, a one-time incident, or the work of refugees? He decried the fact that the roads were not patrolled, that the inhabitants of rural settlements had no weapons, that the means of transport were defective, and that there was no telephone link with the settlements.

Ben-Zion Dinur agreed with Ben-Gurion that the situation was serious and that public opinion should be prepared. A country that abandons the defense of its capital displays weakness. Nevertheless, he argued that guards would be cheaper than war, and proposed establishing settlements along the borders. He asked that the settlers be prevented from initiating reprisals and recommended against launching a war, at least for the time being.

Responding to Ben-Gurion's sarcastic remark, Peretz Naphtali said that he was proud to be a German-born Zionist, even if that implied the pursuit of peace. He asked that any military action be very carefully weighed beforehand. In his opinion, the country was economically unprepared for a long war.

Ben-Gurion summed up the debate. He said that the public had not been informed of the incident on the Jerusalem–Tel Aviv road so as not to cause panic. He rejected Naphtali's assessment and was not dismayed by the possibility that the people would have less to eat if there were war. He was concerned that the idea that war should not be waged in any circumstances might win the day and rejected the contention that Israel could not sustain a war. In his opinion, Britain and the United States would not intervene by force. He was confident that Israel would emerge victorious from a war with the Arabs. Finally, Ben-Gurion made it clear that the subject would be brought before the Government before any military action was taken.

229. R. Shiloah (Tel Aviv) to M. Sharett. 25 May 1953

Orig.: 130.02/2453/20

Shiloah appends to his letter the reply to Nasser he drafted in Sharett's name. He has forwarded the draft to Divon, adding the following instruc-

tions for the meeting with Sadiq: (1) With regard to Paragraph 2(a) in the letter (see below), Divon should point out that Israel assumes that Naguib's latest anti-Israel statements were made before Nasser wrote his letter. (2) On the issue of financial aid to Egypt, he should explain to Sadiq that the idea of economic assistance to the Arab countries, particularly Egypt, had surfaced mainly as a result of Israel's initiative to obtain aid for itself and the region. Sadiq should be told that Israeli leaders, in their recent meetings with Dulles and Stassen, encouraged financial assistance to Egypt.

(3) Sadiq can be told that Israel has learned, from contacts with important American circles, that Egypt could garner greater sympathy in its struggle with Britain by displaying maturity and moderation in its attitude to Israel and making progress towards reaching a settlement. (4) It is worth pointing out to Sadiq that certain circles in Israel believe that Israel should take advantage of Egypt's entanglement in the Suez issue to pressure it militarily. (5) The purpose of the letter to Nasser is to bring about a high-level meeting. (6) To make things easier for the Egyptians, the promise of confidentiality should be reiterated. It should be made clear to them that direct contacts between Israel and the Arabs, without the involvement of a foreign mediator, facilitate absolute secrecy. As for the venue of such a meeting, Israel is willing to meet even in Cairo, if this would be more convenient for Egypt. (7) A suitable opportunity should be found during the conversation to point out the importance of avoiding public controversy at the United Nations, so that Israel will not have to renew its criticism of Egypt for refusing to make peace.

The text of Shiloah's draft for Sharett's reply to Nasser follows:

(1) We have read the note delivered to us with appreciation.

(2) We note that the issues raised include: (a) cessation of hostile propaganda; (b) avoidance of all aggressive actions; (c) free passage through the Suez Canal of ships bound to and from Israel; (d) Israeli assistance in obtaining economic aid for Egypt; (e) Israeli support for Egypt's legitimate national aspirations, by exerting influence on its friends and on public opinion.

(3) Implementation of the first three points above depends on Egypt and will be borne out by its actions. For our part, we will be pleased to note any positive action and the absence of inimical acts.

(4) We believe that, in these times of crisis for Egypt and the region, it is important to reduce tensions along the Israel-Egypt border as soon as possible.

(5) Concerning the passage of ships through the Canal, we have already pointed out in a previous note,[5] and reiterate now, that Egypt is obliged to comply with this demand by the armistice agreements and the Security Council resolution. We also believe that Egypt will receive greater international support in its struggle if it proves that it is fulfilling this international obligation.

(6) With regard to Israel's attitude towards Egypt, we look with favor on Egypt's legitimate aspirations and their full attainment, provided they have no detrimental effect on regional and world peace. Israel provided concrete proof of its support for the legitimate aspirations of the countries of the region when its vote at the United Nations tipped the balance in favor of Libyan independence. Nevertheless we cannot ignore the threat to our existence inherent in certain developments, as long as the neighboring countries refuse to make peace with us. Thus, for example, we cannot support arms supplies to Egypt as long as we have no proof of real progress towards a final settlement and peace.

(7) We have always supported the extension of economic aid to Egypt and wholeheartedly wish the current regime success in its program of domestic reform. Israel is prepared to increase its efforts to that end, but it should be obvious that its ability to give greater momentum to the mobilization of public opinion in favor of aid to Egypt and in favor of its aspirations in general depends on an improvement in the overall climate of relations between the two countries.

(8) In order to augment mutual trust, clarify the practical points raised in the messages exchanged between us to date, and clarify whether substantial progress towards an overall settlement is possible at this stage and what preliminary steps are required for its implementation, we view it essential that authorized representatives of the two sides hold a secret and informal meeting as soon as possible.

Notes

1. Abd al-Rahman Sadiq. See No. 205.
2. The Hebrew version is presented in the appendix below. The French version, which is in the file, has been omitted here.
3. See letter of 24 May 1953, 130.15/3744/1.
4. See No. 223.
5. See No. 70.
6. There was no Egyptian reply to Sharett's letter. A later memorandum, entitled "Talks and Contacts to Clarify the Possibility of a Settlement with Egypt, 1949–1955," states that Divon had learned from his Egyptian interlocutors that the Revolutionary Command Council had decided not to rely on Israel in enlisting American economic assistance because of its doubts concerning Israel's ability to come through, apprehension that relying on Israel would put Egypt too much in its debt, and in particular because the Israeli reply had not contained tangible information about the scope of the assistance that Israel was prepared to extend (130.15/3744/5). For details on subsequent contacts with Egypt, see No. 319.

230. W. B. Smith to A. Eban. 25 May 1953

Notes

1. See No. 177 and n. 2 there.
2. See *SCOR*, Eighth Year, Supplement for April, May, and June 1953, Document S/3007.
3. See No. 74.

231. Ch. Herzog (Washington) to the General Staff of the Israel Defence Forces. 25 May 1953

Coded Tel.: WIA257; Outg.: 93.01/2209/3

Herzog reports on his talk with Waller. Waller read him a telegram from Russell reporting on his talk with Sharett[1] and pointed out that the Three Powers intend to react strongly against any Israeli action. When Herzog asked why they would not come out against the Jordanians, Waller replied that such a step would not be out of the question, if only Israel could demonstrate the justice of its claim and not always lag behind the Arabs in its propaganda. He read Herzog telegrams that had arrived from Amman concerning an Israeli attack on 11 Arab villages. The American attaché in Amman found ammunition with Israeli markings in one of these villages.

Notes

1. See No. 224, n. 3.
2. In this telegram (19 May 1953), Comay reported that, according to Jordan's complaint to the Armistice Commission, an Israeli patrol had entered Beit Sira on the night of 17 May. A grenade was hurled into one of the houses, killing one person and injuring three others. Comay added the following comment: "We know nothing about this. An inquiry has ascertained that IDF forces were not involved in the action" (130.09/2309/13).

232. M. Shalit (Washington) to the United States Division. 25 May 1953

IMDEA 532.73/178

Shalit, who was present at the meeting, reports on Eban's talk with Johnston (18 May) about the latter's impressions from his visit to the Middle East.

(1) *The question of peace:* Naguib admits that Egypt is the key to peace; were Egypt to take the first step, the other Arab countries would follow suit. At present Naguib is devoting himself exclusively to the Suez Canal issue, but he promised Johnston that after this is resolved he will apply his energies to the problem of peace. Johnston does not believe that Naguib will honor his promise, because he will be under no pressure to do so and because he is mistaken in his assessment that his strong leadership is accepted by the other Arab countries. Johnston agreed with Eban that the Canal issue should be linked with that of peace. Shalit notes that Johnston is the only American the Israelis have met who, despite being impressed by Naguib's personality, does not hesitate to question the sincerity of his promises. The State Department does not agree with Johnston's position and insists that each problem should be resolved separately.

Johnston said that the upper echelons of the Arab leadership understand that Israel is a *fait accompli;* they recognize that sooner or later the Arab states will have to reach a settlement with Israel. At lower levels, however, there is rabid hatred of Israel and no will to reach a settlement. He disagreed with Eban, who asserted that the Arabs are refusing to negotiate directly with the Israelis.

(2) *Dulles's visit to the Middle East:* Johnston had advised Dulles not to undertake the trip, but, according to him, Dulles's future depends on the outcome of this tour. To date there have been no significant indications of good will. If Dulles's visit to India is successful he will be able to point to this as an achievement; otherwise the trip will be a resounding failure. Shalit adds that Johnston's statements reveal an element of derision for Dulles—an attitude not uncommon in Washington these days.

(3) *Impressions of Naguib:* Naguib makes an extremely strong impression on all who meet him. He impresses people by his erudition and worldliness and displays an astonishing knowledge of history; one can conduct an interesting conversation with him on virtually any cultured topic. He is surrounded by people who are young in both age and spirit; what is most interesting and encouraging is that they think and plan in the long term and look before they leap. The conventional view to the contrary, Naguib is not captive to the groups that surrounds him. He is a strong leader, popular in Egypt, but less so in the other Arab countries. His personal charisma is like Eisenhower's and Johnston told him as much.

(4) *Impressions of Israel:* Johnston was profoundly impressed by Ben-Gurion. He said that he knew of many governments, and not just in the Middle East, that would benefit from such a prime minister.

(5) *"Point Four" and aid to Israel:* In Johnston's opinion, there were two reasons for the plan's failure in Israel: (a) those charged with implementing the plan in Israel lack the stature commensurate with the task; (b) they have no clearly defined objective and are spreading out into different areas with no understanding or goal. He does not agree with their view that

what they need is financing, not experts. Shalit explained that there is a certain disillusionment with the Point Four plan; many have concluded that if Israel had been given the money it would already have found the experts, more efficiently. Johnston replied that he had submitted a number of proposals and is weighing the possibility that in the future funds will be placed at the disposal of Israel, which would recruit the experts.

(6) *U.S. Middle East policy:* Johnston explained that the United States seems to have no clear Middle East policy. He met Americans in the region who are conducting anti-Israel propaganda and criticizing their country's policies—a result, he believes, of the lack of a clear policy. He mentioned that he had met with President Eisenhower, Dulles, and Stassen and had relayed to them the impressions he gained of his visit to the region.

233. E. Elath to M. Comay (telegram). 27 May 1953

Notes

1. See No. 146.
2. 5 May 1953, 93.04/41/13. In the same telegram, Comay reported on Ben-Gurion's talk with Evans when the latter presented the note from Churchill. See No. 226.

234. Report on the Meeting between the Delegations of Israel and Syria (Rosh Pinna, 27 May 1953, 11:00 A.M.)[1]

130.02/2434/4

The meeting was attended by representatives of UNTSO, Syria, and Israel. The Israeli delegation was headed by Segan-Aluf Gaon, the Syrian delegation by Lt.-Col. Shatīlah. Vigier asked both sides whether they were willing to agree, once and for all, on a new armistice line along the entire border from north to south. At Shatīlah's request, Gaon reported on the construction of the Jordan River dam and the Lowdermilk Plan. He explained that the dam would benefit Syrian farmers, since it would ensure a regular water supply and make it possible to prevent flooding by the Jordan River. Gaon's report was followed by a discussion of the lands that the Arabs would lose as a result of construction of the dam. At one point in the discussion Shatīlah asked whether Israel would go ahead and build the dam even if the Arabs refused to modify their position. Gaon answered that there was no point in speculating. Perhaps Israel would raise the issue with other countries in order to find a solution. He could not say what would happen in case of an intractable Arab refusal.

To Vigier's question as to the possibility of paying monetary compensation for land flooded by the dam, Gaon replied that this is indeed a possibility.

The discussion then moved on to the issue of the armistice line in the northern demilitarized zone. Gaon explained that in the northern zone one-third of the land—around 1200 out of 3600 dunams—would be in Israel's hands. Because at the last session[3] Shatīlah had voiced concern at Gaon's proposal, asserting that it would threaten the Beirut-Marj'ayoun-Quneitra road, he was now proposing that the line pass slightly north of Border Post 40.

Gaon asked that the border in the northwestern section of the central demilitarized zone (in the vicinity of Tel Zahla) be moved several meters east, to enable Israel to exploit the peat beds north of Lake Hula. Shatīlah protested that Israel was proposing a new modification, this time on the pretext of transporting peat. He said that Israel presents new demands at every meeting. Syria's intention, when it agreed to the talks, had been misunderstood. He doubted that the present request would be acceptable to his government, but promised an answer at the next meeting.

Shatīlah proceeded to inquire whether the border in the central demilitarized zone would follow the new or old course of the Jordan River. Gaon replied that Israel has already agreed that the border pass one meter east of the new course.

As to the southern demilitarized zone, Gaon explained that the border would pass one meter east of the water line; Israel undertakes not to build anything in that area. Shatīlah asked about the fishing rights of residents on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. Gaon answered that Israel is prepared to issue permits, as had been the custom during the Mandate period. They would not be prevented from using the water.

The border between Nuqeib and 'Ein Gev, Gaon went on to say, would be determined by areas under cultivation. Shatīlah said that Dayan had promised[4] that the inhabitants of Tawafiq would be allowed access to the water, if an overall agreement were reached. Gaon said that he had heard of no such promise; perhaps it was being confused with another proposal that Col. Taxis had once put forward. Gaon explained that when Taxis had made this proposal it was clear that Tawafiq could derive its water supply from springs near the Yarmuk. A canal could be dug, or a pipeline laid from Tel Qazir. As for Shatīlah's question about fishing rights, Gaon said that access to the Sea of Galilee is not desirable for the present; perhaps the residents of Tawafiq are not even interested in fishing. If former residents of Samakh and Samara are living there they would receive permits, but would have to fish about 15 kilometers further north. Shatīlah promised to convey to his government the substance of their discussion. He summed up the three new points that Israel had raised as follows: (1) a new border in the northern demilitarized zone, running east-west rather than north-

south; (2) the transport of peat; (3) the flooding of Syrian territory as a result of the Lowdermilk Plan.

Shatīlah proposed dividing the balance of the discussion into two parts: setting the border; and compensation. He believes that the border issue should be settled first. The Syrian delegation has shown considerable forbearance during the six months of talks. But if an agreement cannot be reached, Syria could not be held responsible for the failure. Shatīlah promised to maintain contact with Vigier and inform him of the outcome of discussions in Damascus.[5]

Notes

1. Date of document: 31 May 1953.
2. The names of those taking part in the session have been omitted here. The participants were UN personnel, led by Vigier, and representatives of Israel and Syria.
3. See No. 195.
4. Compare Nos. 23 and 30.
5. No date was set for another round. This meeting was the last in the series of high-level talks with the Syrians.

235. E. Ben-Horin (Washington) to A. Eban. 28 May 1953

Memorandum: 93.08/358/3

Ben-Horin reports on his meeting with Waller:

(1) *Dulles's Middle East tour:* The personal contact with the Israeli prime minister was important for Dulles. His party was strongly impressed by the interesting presentations of their Israeli counterparts. As for the Arabs, it is evident from reports received to date that in private talks their leaders said nothing about Israel that deviates from their public statements. Dulles had intended to devote time in Egypt to a discussion of peace with Israel; but because he arrived at the zenith of the Anglo-Egyptian crisis he found no opportunity to do so. He was aware that the debate over the Suez Canal made the timing of his visit inappropriate, but had decided not to forgo the tour because he attached great importance to the presence in the Middle East of the Secretary of State, as a demonstration of the U.S. interest in the region. In Waller's opinion, the tour will leave Dulles with one of two assessments: (a) He will gain the impression that Israel is the only country willing to cooperate in regional defense and will see that the Arab countries are not interested in peace, defense, or cooperation. This will lead him to conclude that a pro-Israeli orientation would further U.S. interests. (b) Alternately, he will be impressed by the Arabs' bitterness and accept

the argument that the United States bears some responsibility for this resentment. He might think that there is a prospect for a fundamental change in the Arab attitude if their demands are satisfied, especially those relating to Israel.

(2) *U.S. policy in the Middle East:* Waller explained that U.S. policy in the Middle East entails continued support of Israel's legitimate interests but an end to any pro-Israeli bias. He believes that in recent years Israel has enjoyed preferential treatment in many important matters. Ben-Horin rejected this argument and asserted that it is a myth being fabricated against Israel by some senior officials in the State Department, who believe in it. Ben-Horin admitted that the U.S. public evinces special sympathy towards Israel, but this is not the same thing as preferential diplomatic treatment. True, there were cases of State Department support for Israel, including generous financial assistance; but this has always been because the State Department had determined that this was in the best interests of the United States and the Free World. Ben-Horin added that there are basic problems that cannot be solved by supporting one side or another. Among them are the question of peace, support for countries willing to cooperate in mutual defense, and the promotion of development. Israel feels that the new U.S. policy-makers realize that this is the case. Waller asserted that this is not the full picture; he asked for a list of American political decisions that could disprove the claims of preferential treatment for Israel, so that he could submit it to State Department officials.

(3) *The incidents along the Israeli-Jordanian border:* Waller devoted much time to this issue. He emphasized that the State Department cannot support a policy of reprisal raids, even if it could temporarily calm the border. The IDF can undertake whatever defensive operations it deems appropriate within Israel, but it is out of the question for it to cross the border and destroy houses and villages. Ben-Horin denied the reports about reprisals and pointed to the intolerable situation of the Jewish frontier settlements. Waller said that Israel must come to terms with the fact that when Arabs infiltrate Israel, they are described as pathetic Arabs seeking food or livestock, whereas when the Israelis attack the tendency is to say, "The Jews are at it again." Ben-Horin replied that Israel is not prepared to accept such a situation. Waller asked why Israel does not complain to the Security Council. Ben-Horin said that Israel's experience with the Council has not been good. Waller explained that the lack of Israeli complaints is understood as indicating that Israel is not fully convinced of the justice of its claims.

(4) *UN officers in the truce-supervision forces:* Waller clarified that there is no direct or indirect link between the State Department and U.S. military officers serving with UNTSO. The State Department receives no reports whatsoever from individual UN officers. To the best of his knowledge, even the reports submitted by U.S. military attachés are not based on

information supplied by UN officers. He emphasized that before any American UN observer is sent to the region he must report to the State Department, where Waller personally interviews him to ensure that he is absolutely free of antisemitic tendencies

(5) *The Arab boycott:* The feeling in the State Department is that the Arabs evince the greatest degree of unity on matters concerning Israel, especially the Arab boycott. Ben-Horin argued that submitting to the boycott merely increases Arab intransigence, whereas opposition would soften it.

Notes

1. See No. 252.
2. Of September 1951. See Vol. 6, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, p. 257.

236. G. Avner and B. Razin (Sofia) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 28 May 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.11/2507/5

Avner and Razin report on a conversation with the Soviet ambassador in Sofia. They read him the statement by the Government of Israel on the affair of the Jewish doctors[2] and explained Israel's stand.[3] The ambassador replied that he does not know whether the Soviet response would be delivered via Sofia, but assumes that it will. He said that he understands Israel's position that the wording of the letter on resumption of relations must be worked out in advance, in order to prevent a negative answer. He asked whether it is Israel's intention to establish diplomatic relations or to develop friendly relations in general. He requested that the fact of the meeting be kept confidential.

Notes

1. The reference is to the Soviet ambassador in Sofia (see Avner and Razin's telegram to the Eastern Europe Division, 27 May 1953, 130.09/2341/11).
2. See No. 156 (Editorial Note).
3. See No. 216, n. 3.
4. See No. 245 (Editorial Note) and No. 246.
5. On 25 May, the ministers representing the General Zionist Party resigned from the Government, after the Mapai Central Committee decided that the proposed State Education Law must allow schools that wished to do so to raise the red flag and sing the *Internationale* on May Day. The General Zionists viewed this as a breach of the coalition agreement, which stipulated that state schools would fly only the national

flag and sing only the national anthem. The American press viewed the departure of the General Zionists as proof that Israel was ruled by a party that espoused Communist ideology. In its dispatch, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency emphasized that those who were demanding continued allegiance to Socialist symbols were the greatest opponents of Communism. The General Zionists rejoined the Government on 4 June.

237. Editorial Note

Delivery of a Note Verbale *from the U.S. Department of State to the Foreign Minister of Israel, 28 May 1953*

On 28 May, Russell, the chargé d'affaires in the U.S. embassy in Israel, read to Sharett the note printed below. In reply, Sharett said that Israel was not evading its responsibility for finding a solution to the problem of infiltration, but the Jordanians bore responsibility for the current situation, since they had attacked first. He added that even if there had recently been a number of incidents in Jordanian territory, they had been in response to Jordanian actions, with the object of curbing Jordanian aggression. The claim that both sides were attacking indiscriminately was a distortion of the truth.

Sharett pointed out that since his last meeting with Russell (No. 224, n. 2) there had been no incidents along the Jerusalem–Tel Aviv road. He expressed gratification that the State Department was pleased by Israel's consent to renew the local commanders' agreement and explained that the notification had been sincere. Israel's reservations, contained in the Prime Minister's reply to Dulles (No. 227), were not designed to torpedo renewal of the agreement. He promised that Israel would do everything possible to implement the agreement when it was signed. Towards the end of the meeting, Russell reported Dulles's interest in the Prime Minister's reply and in the situation along the borders. He added that his government was putting pressure on the Jordanian government to agree to a framework to help find a solution to the infiltration problem. (See Bendor to Eban, 3 June 1953, 93.03/84/20; compare *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1232–33.)

238. *Note Verbale* from the Department of State of the United States. 28 May 1953

Notes

1. See No. 224 and n. 3 there.
2. See No. 227.

239. A. Eban (Washington) to W. Eytan. 29 May 1953

Orig.: 130.02/2385/3

Eban proposes telling the Dutch that Israel will welcome an approach by them to the Soviets, as if on their own initiative, concerning the latter's thoughts about renewal of diplomatic relations with Israel and whether there is an intention to renew them. Eban's impression from the reports of the Israeli minister in the Hague on his talks with the Dutch,[1] as well as from the information about the hints made by the Polish minister in Sofia to the Israeli representative there, that there are prospects for a renewal of relations, but the problem of the diplomatic initiative has not been solved. Eban assumes that if the Soviets are interested in renewing relations, such an approach will create an appropriate and seemly opportunity.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 161 and n. 1 there.
2. See No. 183. See also Nos. 216 and 236.

240. M. Comay to Sir Francis Evans. 29 May 1953

Notes

1. See No. 226 (appendix).
2. See Nos. 182, 219, and 241, and n. 4 there.

241. M. Comay to the Israel Embassy in Washington (telegram). 31 May 1953

Notes

1. Sent also to London, Paris, and Rome.
2. For a detailed report on the meeting, see Gaon to the Chief of Military Operations, 3 June 1953, 130.02/2429/4.
3. See No. 244.
4. For details of the meeting between Gaon and Riley, and of Fawzi's letter, see Gaon to the Chief of Military Operations, 2 June 1953, 130.02/2429/4.

242. Editorial Note

Government Debate on the Situation along the Borders, 31 May 1953

In the wake of an incident in which shots were fired at an Israeli train and of attempted thefts by infiltrators from Qalqiliya, the Government discussed possible responses to such activities. The Prime Minister proposed shooting back if there were further shooting incidents. Sharett proposed that the Jordanians first be warned, through Riley, that Israel would respond with force if they did not take control of the situation. The meeting ended with a decision "to empower the Foreign Minister to deliver an appropriate declaration to Gen. Riley concerning the attacks on road and railroad traffic along the eastern border."

243. Editorial Note

Speech by John Foster Dulles on U.S. Radio and Television, 1 June 1953

In a broadcast speech to the American people on 1 June 1953, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles reported on his Middle East tour and outlined several basic principles of U.S. policy in the region.

About his visit to Israel he said, *inter alia*, that he and Stassen had been "impressed by the vision and supporting energy with which the people are building their new nation," "inspired by a great faith. "The Prime Minister and other officials with whom he had met had convinced him that Israel wished to live in peace with her neighbors. Jerusalem, he said, "is divided into armed camps split between Israel and the Arab nation of Jordan. The atmosphere is heavy with hate." When he looked at the Mount of Olives, he "felt anew that Jerusalem is, above all, the Holy Place of the Christian, Moslem, and Jewish faiths. This has been repeatedly emphasized by the United Nations. This does not necessarily exclude some political status in Jerusalem for Israel and Jordan. But the world religious community has claims in Jerusalem which take precedence over the political claims of any particular nation."

With regard to the Arab refugees, Dulles said that most of them were living along Israel's borders. The majority were living in terrible conditions and degenerating spiritually and physically. Some of these refugees could be resettled in Israel, but most would have to be settled in Arab countries. To this end it would be necessary to implement irrigation projects that would make it possible to exploit larger expanses for agricultural purposes. Dulles noted the desperate need for irrigation water in the region and expressed his hope that it would be possible to use contributions from the

UN and other funds for the coordinated exploitation of the rivers flowing through Israel and the Arab countries.

Of the six conclusions that Dulles presented in his speech, three related directly to the Middle East:

(1) The United States must try to allay the deep resentment directed against it in the wake of the establishment of Israel and to restore its good name in the region. The Arabs were afraid that the U.S. administration would support Israel's "aggressive expansionism" and were more fearful of Zionism than of Communism. On the other hand, the Israelis were afraid that the Arabs "may try to push them into the sea." In an attempt to dispel the two sides' opposing fears, the United States had become party to the Tripartite Declaration of May 1950. Since this declaration had not reassured the Arabs, it must be made clear that the Administration stood behind it. The United States could not afford "to be distrusted by millions who could be sturdy friends of freedom."

(2) Peace in the Middle East was a necessity. The armistice between Israel and its neighbors was tenuous. Both sides would have to make concessions for the sake of peace. Though the parties concerned had the primary responsibility for making peace, the United States would not hesitate to use its influence in every appropriate way "to promote a step-by-step reduction of tension in the area and the conclusion of ultimate peace."

(3) The plan to establish a Middle East Defense Organization was not feasible in the near future. The countries of the region evinced some willingness to organize for regional defense, but a collective security system could not be imposed from outside. It must stem from a sense of common destiny and common danger. The United States would help bolster the defense of the countries of the region against the threat to the Free World.

244. M. Comay to the Israel Embassy in Washington.[1] 2 June 1953

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2309/13

Comay reports that at the emergency meeting of the Armistice Commission[2] on 1 June, Nashashibi read out the Jordanian government's reaction to the proposed commanders' agreement.[3] The Jordanians expressed a willingness to discuss amendments based on the principles of the agreement. They wish to prevent infiltration and incidents. They said that Israel's memorandum on the prevention of infiltration[4] was tantamount to interference in internal Jordanian affairs and had been shelved. Gaon proposed that the local commanders meet without delay. Nashashibi promised an answer within two days. A meeting was arranged between Nashashibi and

Gaon to draw up guidelines for the commanders. The IDF intends to include in these guidelines the main points submitted by Israel for the proposed agreement.[5]

Notes

1. The telegram was sent also to Rome, Paris, and London.
2. At the meeting, two resolutions condemning Israel and six condemning Jordan for various incidents during the course of May were adopted.
3. See No. 241.
4. See No. 146.
5. For the text of the new local commanders' agreement, signed on 8 June, see No. 256.

245. Editorial Note

Delivery of a Note Verbale *from the Government of the Soviet Union to the Government of Israel, 2 June 1953*

On 2 June, the Soviet ambassador in Sofia, Mikhail Bodrov, read the following note to Israel's chargé d'affaires in Sofia, Gershon Avner, and the first secretary in the legation, Ben-Zion Razin. Off the record, he added that the Israeli note should include the subject of punishment for those guilty of throwing the bomb at the Soviet Legation in Tel Aviv and the issue of military alliances. He asked that further contacts be conducted directly with him and not through intermediaries (see Avner and Razin to the Foreign Ministry, telegram 74, 3 June 1953, 130.11/2507/5).

246. *Note Verbale* from the Government of the U.S.S.R. 2 June 1953

130.11/2507/7

Responding to the Israel minister's statement of 28 May,[1] the Soviet ambassador in Sofia declares that the Soviet Union is prepared to consider the request for resumption of diplomatic relations with the Government of Israel. In this context, the situation that had precipitated the severance of relations between the two countries should be borne in mind. In its communiqué of 11 February,[2] the government of the U.S.S.R. announced that criminal elements had thrown a bomb at the Soviet legation in Tel Aviv; the wife of the minister, the wife of a member of the legation staff, and a member of the staff had been wounded, and the building had been dam-

aged. The Soviet government expects the Government of Israel to inform it of the steps it had taken to punish the perpetrators of this act of terrorism.

As for Avner's assertion that the Government of Israel has always sought and continues to seek friendly relations with the Soviet Union, it is to be expected that such an aspiration be reflected in Israel's foreign policy. The renewal and maintenance of normal relations between the U.S.S.R. and Israel is inextricably linked with Israel's position on military pacts and agreements directed against the Soviet Union. If the Israeli government wishes to affirm its statement on relations with the Soviet Union, then, for the sake of peace, it must promise to refrain from participation in alliances and agreements directed against the Soviet Union.

The decision as to whether the appropriate conditions prevail for the renewal of diplomatic relations depends on Israel's attitude to the aforementioned problem.

The Soviet Union, which actively supported the establishment of the State of Israel, affirms its desire to maintain friendly relations with Israel.

Notes

1. See No. 236.
2. See No. 79 (Editorial Note) and No. 80.
3. For Israel's reaction, see No. 249.

247. L. Eshkol to A. Eban (telegram). 3 June 1953

Note

1. On Eban's activities to obtain an immediate grant for Israel, see No. 279.

248. Israel Delegation to the United Nations (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 5 June 1953

Coded Tel.: NWTA38; Outg.: 93.01/2209/4

A meeting of the Israel delegation to the United Nations on 4 June, chaired by Abba Eban, agreed on the following points in connection with the transfer of the Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem: (1) Ceremony should be avoided; if possible, there should be no prior press announcement of the date of the transfer. (2) A circular should be distributed to the foreign missions on changes in work procedures only after the transfer. (3) On the day

of the transfer, the Foreign Minister should make a statement in the Knesset concerning the Government's policy with regard to the Holy Places. His speech should include official notification of the conclusion of negotiations concerning the assets of the German Catholic Church and of the agreement on the assets of the German Protestant Church. (4) The Delegation suggests that the Government introduce legislation on all aspects of administrative procedure concerning the Holy Places, including tax exemptions, easing of restrictions for pilgrims, and the like. A council of religious leaders residing in Jerusalem should be established to serve as an advisory body in implementing the law. The foreign minister and the minister of religious affairs should be charged with its implementation. (5) Such legislation would demonstrate Israel's sincerity and facilitate an international arrangement for supervision of the Holy Places, should this be decided upon.

Note

1. The details of the transfer were discussed in an extraordinary meeting held at the Foreign Ministry on 3 June and chaired by Sharett. The decisions taken included the following: (1) The date of the move would be decided by Sharett and Eytan and kept strictly secret. (2) The date would be conveyed to Ambassador Eban in a confidential telegram. (3) Advance notification to the foreign missions in Tel Aviv would be provided no more than 72 hours prior to the transfer. For a summary of the meeting, 5 June 1953, see File 130.20/2491/2; see also No. 280.

249. W. Eytan to the Israel Legation in Sofia (telegram). 5 June 1953

Notes

1. Sent in response to the Soviet communiqué. See No. 246.
2. See No. 71 (Editorial Note).
3. See Vol. 6, No. 521, and n. 1 there.
4. Levavi telegraphed as follows to the legation in Sofia: "Should the ambassador argue against the first part of your communiqué and assert that in fact we took no steps either to prevent the incident or to find the culprits, you can reply that we do not bear sole responsibility for this situation. As for preventive measures, it is well known that we wished to place guards at a particular spot but were not allowed to do so. As for not finding the culprits, we wanted to conduct an investigation at the site of the explosion immediately, but were prevented from doing so for 15 hours. If the ambassador disputes the second part, point out that the Soviet Union has relations with NATO members despite its view that this is an organization directed

against it, whereas Israel is not party to any alliance" (5 June 1953, 130.11/2507/5). See also Nos. 250 and 269.

250. G. Avner (Sofia) to A. Levavi. 6 June 1953

Copy from handwritten original: 130.02/2381/21

Avner record his opinion of the Israeli communiqué to the Soviets.[1] He believes that the second section was well phrased, but the first part was unconvincing. It was too full of rhetoric, did not sound sincere, and seemed carelessly written. It would have been appropriate to explain to the Soviets that recent waves of immigration to Israel included uneducated and even criminal elements, who were responsible for the attack on the legation. It is better to offer an embarrassing explanation than to offer none at all. Pending resumption of relations with the Soviet Union, Avner proposes renewed efforts to lay the groundwork for action on behalf of Soviet and Eastern European Jewry. He feels that the Foreign Ministry has adopted the view that Zionism and Communism are engaged in an inevitable struggle, so that it hardly matters what Israel does. Sharett himself has said, on more than one occasion, that it is an error to believe that friendly diplomatic gestures towards the Soviet Union can win Israel any fundamental gains. Avner holds that this attitude is mistaken, adducing his conversation at a diplomatic reception with the Hungarian minister in Sofia as proof. The minister began by stating that Israel's declarations to the effect that it seeks the Soviet Union's friendship are mere diplomatic rhetoric; Israel is not really interested in friendly relations with the Soviet Union. He added that the press in other non-Communist countries, such as Finland and Sweden, does not engage in slanderous attacks against the Soviet Union of the sort found in the Israeli press. In his opinion, Israel's behavior is not conducive to a community of interests between itself and the Soviet Union. The minister explained that Israel's request that Jews be allowed to leave Hungary runs counter to the principles of the Communist regime concerning emigration. Furthermore, there are security and economic considerations that preclude giving exit permits to Jews. Israel evinces no interest in developing commercial relations with Hungary, and this too impedes the creation of common interests. Finally, the Hungarian minister stated that the activities of the Israel legation within the Budapest Jewish community frequently lead to the arrest of Jews whose Zionist activities contravene Hungarian law. In conclusion, he said that normal relations without mutual attacks are possible, and added that from time to time Hungary might allow a few couples to leave, but so complicated a maneuver as the exodus of thousands of citizens runs counter to his country's interests.

Avner deduces from this conversation that the idea that "all East Europeans are irrational" should be rejected. He believes that Israel should try to create a community of interests with Eastern European countries and suggests several ways in which this might be done:

(1) Deciding in principle to act along the lines proposed above; (2) offering a better explanation of Israel's efforts to bring to justice those responsible for the bombing of the Soviet legation; (3) raising the level of the diplomatic missions in Eastern Europe and the rank of their staffs; (4) establishing a mission in Peking after the Korean armistice is signed and returning to the policy of voting in favor of China at the United Nations, even though this runs counter to the U.S. position; (5) commercial initiatives—Israel should seek out business opportunities in Eastern Europe and discard Sharett's postulate that it is not worth investing efforts in commercial relations in return for some gain in the realm of diplomatic protocol; (6) instructing Israeli diplomats in the United States to exercise caution in their public statements, along with a decision by Israel's leaders to stop their anti-Communist rhetoric and abandon the childish contention that such speeches are essential for "educating the youth." Such oratory has not caused a single defection from the United Workers Party (Mapam) or the Israel Communist Party (Maki). In any case, there is no domestic Communist threat in Israel; (7) concluding an effective arrangement with the press to prevent publication of articles that disparage Communist regimes; (8) attempting to conduct a dialog along these lines with American Jewish leaders; (9) avoiding unnecessary harassment of Communists in Israel, unless they are actively harming state security; (10) suspending all activities aimed at gathering sensitive information from Jews—in other words, halting the interrogation of immigrants and activities in Eastern Europe aimed at obtaining general information; (11) arranging with journalists based in Haifa, who interview immigrants as they debark, not to publish the latter's condemnations of their countries of origin; (12) instructing the new legation in Moscow to temporarily suspend all clandestine liaison relation with the Jewish community, while continuing them in other East European countries; (13) avoiding setting obstacles in the way of members of the peace movement in Israel who wish to travel abroad; (14) taking suitable action to find accommodations in Jerusalem for Eastern European diplomats when the Foreign Ministry is transferred there; (15) closing ranks with those opposed to the rearmament of both Germanies, taking care not to ruffle Adenauer or impede the reparations agreement.

Notes

1. See No. 249.
2. See No. 179.

3. The paragraph has been omitted here.
4. The paragraph has been omitted here.
5. For Levavi's reply to Avner, see his letter of 23 June 1953, 130.11/2511/9. Levavi rejected Avner's analysis and rebutted each of his proposals. He agreed that it was desirable for Israel to raise the level of its representation in Eastern Europe (Proposal No. 3), but argued that this should be done only on a mutual basis; "as long as there is no change in the East Bloc representation here, it is hard to envisage unilateral steps on our part." Levavi agreed with Avner that Israel should consider a diplomatic representation in China (Proposal No. 4); but "clearly we cannot get there before leading Western countries that already have a foothold there." Hence "one should not exaggerate the advantage that would accrue to us vis-à-vis the Soviets from such a step. . . ." Concerning trade relations with Eastern Europe (Proposal No. 5), Levavi suggested that Avner shed his reservations about the Economic Division and listed several negative factors impeding the development of economic relations with Eastern Europe. Levavi vigorously rejected Proposals 6 through 9 about avoiding a full-scale ideological campaign against Communism. This was a "far-fetched proposal . . . that must on no account be implemented." He pointed out that Avner erred in his estimate of the electoral prospects of the Israel Communist Party; in comparison with McCarthyism, Israeli, Zionist, and American Jewish pronouncements were quite liberal. He added that "Israel is the only non-Communist state in Asia in which the Communist Party is legal and Communists are truly safe from serious and arbitrary persecution." Levavi argued that members of the peace movement were totally free to attend conferences abroad and rejected what Avner said on this issue (Proposal No. 13). Likewise, he rejected Proposals 14 and 15. He added that, despite everything, he accepted an assessment made recently by the journalist Isaac Deutscher concerning the possibility of Jewish emigration to Israel from the Soviet Union within five or six years, as a result of internal processes in the Communist world.

251. Editorial Note

Government Discussion of Dulles's Speech, 7 June 1953

At the Government meeting of 7 June, Sharett analyzed Dulles's speech and its expected repercussions on Israeli policy (see No. 243).

He said that the speech contained harsh statements and hints. Should they be reflected in American policy Israel could expect serious clashes with the Administration. He made two qualifications, however: (1) In America a speech was not necessarily a statement of policy, but only the expression of an opinion that did not commit the president. (2) Although the speech was not unequivocal, the Israeli press had criticized it severely on two points: (a) Jerusalem and (b) the Arab League.

(a) With regard to Jerusalem, Dulles had not mentioned internationalization. His reference to Jerusalem, however, could be construed as an attempt to restore it to the international agenda and present it as an important issue. Sharett explained that the question of Jerusalem was still not re-

solved and warned them against the illusion, prevalent among the Israeli public, that the international community would accept *faits accomplis*. So far as world opinion was concerned, the issue of Jerusalem had not been resolved; nor did it even accept Israeli sovereignty over the city and designation of Jerusalem as its capital. (b) Contrary to press reports, Dulles had not stated that the Arab League should be strengthened. He merely emphasized the ability of the United States to contribute towards strengthening regional defense arrangements for those Middle Eastern countries that wished to present a united front against the Communist threat.

On the other hand, Sharett made plain, the speech contained certain nuances that were causes for anxiety. The new American Administration tended to belittle its predecessor and accuse it of a policy that favored Israel and overlooked the interests of Arab countries. Dulles's speech had included statements in this vein; it had even been implied that the Arab countries' fear of Zionism outweighed their fear of Communism and kept them from supporting the West in its efforts against Soviet penetration of the region. Sharett said that Dulles's comments amounted to a quasi-justification of the Arabs' fear of the Jews and their failure to take a stand against Communism. Sharett also noted Dulles's comments to the effect that concessions are necessary to obtain peace and that the Arab refugees should be resettled both in Arab countries and in territory under Israeli control. He emphasized the danger that such statements could pose to Israel.

Sharett proposed intensifying Israeli information efforts and making it plain to the Americans that they could expect a clash with Israel if they exerted pressure on the issues raised in the speech.

Ben-Gurion said that the broadcast contained some unclear statements that could be interpreted in several ways. He proposed avoiding a public debate with Dulles. Nevertheless, he said that the Americans must be told that the Arabs would not fight Communism even if they had no conflict with Israel, and that it was difficult to rely on them. They were not fighting, had not fought, and would not fight Communism. The most important thing was to prevent them from obtaining weapons that would be directed against Israel.

252. A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram). 7 June 1953

Notes

1. See No. 74.
2. See ibid., n. 1.
3. See No. 253, paragraph 1; and see n. 1 there.
4. In his speech on 1 June; see No. 243 (Editorial Note).

253. A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram). 8 June 1953

Notes

1. The meeting with Monnett Davis apparently took place on 7 June. Compare No. 252, paragraph 5.
2. See No. 243 (Editorial Note), No. 251 (Editorial Note), and No. 257. See also Eban's analysis of the speech in his telegram to the United States Division, 2 June 1953, 130.20/2474/4, and in the appendix to his letter to Sharett, 22 June 1953, 130.02/2382/22.
3. See No. 257.

254. E. Najar (Tel Aviv) to W. Eytan. 8 June 1953

Copy: 92.02/172/15

Najar summarizes his conversation with Gilbert, the French ambassador in Tel Aviv, on the French diplomatic consultation in Paris: (1) The conference decided to recommend that a trade agreement be signed with Israel. (2) French diplomats posted in Arab capitals expressed various opinions about Israel; it was clear that they had been influenced by Arab propaganda. Some aired their doubts as to Israel's ability to overcome its political and economic problems. Others expressed the opinion that Israel is bent on military expansion. There was unanimous agreement that the Arabs really do fear Israeli expansionism. (3) The French believe that Britain is attempting to improve its standing with Iraq and Jordan and that special emphasis should be placed on ensuring Syria's future status. Shishakli must be supported against his domestic opponents. The French consider President Chamoun to be a British agent working to expand Hashemite influence in the region. (4) The French ambassador to Egypt told the meeting that he does not detect hatred of Israel among the Egyptian leadership. His impression from talks with Naguib is that it would not be difficult to achieve a settlement between Israel and Egypt were a way found to settle the Anglo-Egyptian dispute. The Egyptians are militarily weak and unable to engage the British militarily. Because it is aware of its weakness, the Egyptian government will not get entangled in a war with Israel. He concluded that emphasis must be placed on achieving peace between Israel and Syria, in order to thwart the Hashemites. (5) As for the Middle East Defense Organization, the consensus was that the plan has been shelved for the time being. (6) Gilbert gained the impression that neither Damascus nor Amman is much bothered by the border incidents. He believes that they distress Israel more than the Arabs and that Israel

relates to border issues far more seriously than the Arab states do, because of the ratio between its area and the length of its borders. (7) The conference discussed arms supply to Israel. The Quai d'Orsay is not overly enthusiastic, due to overall considerations relating to the Arab countries. The French desire to maintain some sort of balance between arms supplies to Syria and to Israel. Nevertheless, they agreed to sell Israel artillery pieces and light anti-tank weapons. The British oppose French sales of certain types of weapons (heavy tanks and 155 mm cannon) to Israel, but Gilbert believes that such weapons can be purchased indirectly from France, via Switzerland.

Note

1. See No. 221 and nn. 1 and 2 there.

255. M. Kahany (Geneva) to M. Kidron. 8 June 1953

Orig.: 130.02/2410/1

Kahany summarizes a long talk with Mahmud 'Azmi on the following topics: (1) *The situation in Egypt:* According to 'Azmi, Naguib's position is stable, but he has to rely on stratagems against the Muslim Brotherhood, which is pushing for immediate military action against the British in Suez. He has no intention of fighting; his statements on the subject are intended merely as a sop for the Muslim Brotherhood. He is awaiting the formation of a new government in Britain. (2) *American assistance:* Naguib and his circle are hoping for American help in solving both the conflict with the British and the problem of Israel. They hope the Americans will support the Egyptian demand that the British experts who stay on in the Canal Zone after evacuation be subject to Egyptian, not British, control, and the idea that the Arab Defense Pact would obviate the need for its members to join the West's Middle East defense plan. With regard to Israel, 'Azmi said that Naguib does not wish to begin any negotiations until the Suez problem has been solved. (3) 'Azmi confirmed that Naguib wants peace with Israel and said that his latest anti-Israel statements were intended for internal Arab political consumption. He has to show the Muslim Brotherhood and the other Arab countries that Egypt sides with them against Israel. According to 'Azmi, Naguib has no intention of waging war on Israel; nor do the members of his circle really believe their public statements about the Israeli "threat." Nevertheless, many people do fear Israeli economic intervention in Egypt after the conclusion of peace. Israeli statements about the economic, technical, and scientific assistance that Israel would be

willing to extend to Egypt after peace is attained merely reinforce this anxiety. On the other hand, he admitted that many Egyptians believe the reports from Arab countries depicting Israel as the aggressor in the border clashes. Kahany replied that it is difficult to believe that the Egyptian government lacks accurate information about Israel's true intentions and the situation along the borders. The opinion in Israel is that the Egyptians are deliberately closing their eyes: they do not wish to recognize Israel and do not believe in its desire for peace. The Arab League wants to continue the war against Israel at all costs, not only through the Arab boycott but also by provoking border incidents. Israel is convinced that border incidents are planned from above and are not the results of local initiative. Kahany assured 'Azmi that Egyptian fears of an Israeli "economic threat" are groundless. Israel will not force Egypt to accept aid or take advantage of Israeli expertise; Israel mentions such assistance merely as a token of what it can offer in exchange for a settlement.

Notes

1. See No. 243 (Editorial Note).
2. In the first week of June, the Egyptian daily *al-Yakzah* published a declaration by Naguib to the effect that peace with Israel was impossible. Naguib accused Israel of "having stolen part of their homeland from the Arabs, of preventing free trade between Arab countries, and of constituting a political and economic barrier between the Arabs in Asia and those in Africa." Peace with Israel would only increase the danger. "The only solution is the disappearance of Israel."
3. On further contacts with 'Azmi, see Kahany to Rafael, 16 September 1953, 130.02/2410/2.

256. Local Commanders' Agreement between Israel and Jordan. 8 June 1953

Note

1. The agreement printed here is a revised version of the local commanders' agreement signed on 29 December 1952 (see Vol. 7, No. 521) and abrogated, at Israel's initiative, on 22 January 1953 (see No. 34, nn. 1 and 2).

257. A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram). 9 June 1953

Notes

1. See No. 243 (Editorial Note).

2. For a detailed report on the talk, see Goitein's letter to the United States Division, 10 June 1953, 130.20/2460/6; cf. *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1233–38.

258. A. Moissis to the Western Europe Division. 9 June 1953

Note

1. Jean Moschofolous, the Greek diplomatic representative in Israel.

259. W. Eytan (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Legation in Prague. 9 June 1953

Coded Tel.: S493; Outg.: 130.09/2342/18

Eytan instructs Israel's representative in Prague to gently remind the Indian minister there of his promise to raise the issue of Indo-Israeli relations at upcoming conference in Switzerland of Indian diplomats in Europe. The subject should be approached in an indirect, noncommittal manner, and no pressure should be exerted on the Indian minister.

Note

1. Yehuda Gera, first secretary in the Israel Legation in Czechoslovakia.

260. United States Division (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 9 June 1953

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2309/13

In a meeting with Stevenson during his visit to Israel,[1] Sharett vigorously opposed the repatriation of Arab refugees. He explained why, for both domestic and psychological reasons, Israel cannot allow more refugees to return; the only real solution to the refugee problem is their absorption by Arab countries. Sharett proposed that the rich Arab countries provide loans to Jordan, Syria, and Egypt for development and rehabilitation of the refugees. He also explained why the German reparations cannot be linked with compensation for the refugees, but added that the reparations would help bolster Israel's economy and thereby enhance its ability to pay compensation. Other issues broached in the talk were the internationalization

of Jerusalem, rectification of the armistice lines, territorial continuity in the Negev, and peace.

Note

1. Adlai Stevenson, the Democratic presidential candidate in 1952, visited Israel on 7–12 June 1953. He met with the Prime Minister on 7 June and with the Foreign Minister on 9 June (for reports on these meetings, see IDF Archives, 890.73/2177). See also No. 262, paragraph 7, and n. 4 there.

261. Editorial Note

Extraordinary Meeting of the Government to Discuss a Reaction to Recent Incidents along the Border with Jordan, 11 June 1953

Ben-Gurion called the Government into extraordinary session to discuss incidents along the border. He told the ministers that he had convened the meeting to share responsibility with them. He said that the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee had called for a policy that would not sow panic among the public. The solution could not be found in a single day. It was hard to cope with the situation of refugees living all along the borders. Expectations for a reduction in tensions after the signing of the local commanders' agreement (see No. 256) had come to naught; the situation had even deteriorated. Ben-Gurion gave an account of recent incidents (see No. 262) and said that Israel must respond. The Jordanians could have prevented these incidents. If they were not doing so, it was because they did not wish to do so. Ben-Gurion stressed the hysteria prevailing in the border settlements. He noted, too, that the Foreign Ministry advised against reacting, for political reasons.

Ben-Gurion sought the Government's authorization to react to the recent incidents. He said that all the villages near the scene of the incidents must be "taught a lesson." If infiltration resumed, they must be hit "even twice as hard until these acts stop." He recommended paying no attention to what the State Department, Britain, or France would say. In matters of immigration and defense, he said, Israel need not concern itself with the feelings or opinions of any other country.

Sharett admitted that the situation was extremely serious, but requested that the matter be discussed in a spirit of comradeship. He somewhat resented the Prime Minister's statement that the Foreign Ministry opposed an action that the Defence Minister had wished to carry out the previous day. Sharett believed that the Foreign Ministry was more anxious about relations with other countries, but in this case the issue was not so much

anxiety about these relations as a disagreement about the issue itself. Although he did not ignore security considerations, the Foreign Ministry must take a broader view of the matter. He had no doubt that security should take precedence, but neither did the Government wish to be dragged into war. On the other hand, it had not absolutely renounced retaliation and did accept the premise that some situations and considerations mandated the use of this weapon. The only disagreement involved the effectiveness of retaliation.

Israel's aim must be to force the Jordanian authorities to take action to prevent further infiltration and shooting, not to threaten and frighten the Arab villagers. Sharett said that he was not unaware of the mood in the settlements and the need to boost their morale, but recommended showing restraint for several more days, so as not to give the Jordanians a chance to say that they had just signed the local commanders' agreement with Israel, yet Israel was already retaliating. He advised no immediate reaction, so that Israel could approach the Powers and enlist their pressure against Jordan.

He recommended acting first on the diplomatic level: conducting restrained talks with foreign officials; informing Riley of the seriousness of the situation; and dispatching a summary of the incidents that had taken place the previous week to the ambassadors of Western countries and, through them, to Dulles and Bedell Smith. Then Israel should wait two or three days for results; only if the situation had not changed after this lapse should it react.

Joseph Sapir found it difficult to evaluate how non-retaliation would influence the Jordanians; but he was certain that restraint would cause demoralization in the border settlements. He proposed that if the Government accepted Sharett's proposal it reinforce the units stationed near the settlements. He advised postponing a retaliatory action for a few days, if possible.

Joseph Burg supported Sapir's proposal to delay as long as possible before retaliating.

Ben-Zion Dinur said that the Arabs wanted war with Israel. If Israel showed restraint, it would win a moral victory. He added that if acts of infiltration continued during the coming week, Israel should cross the border and seize strategic positions—but it should carry out such an action openly and in the name of the state.

Levi Eshkol recommended instructing the army to reinforce the settlements.

Pinhas Lavon said that the situation was serious. It affected not only the border settlements, but also the general atmosphere in the country. People had stopped traveling at night and had changed their lifestyle; nor were tourists coming from abroad. He agreed with the Defence Minister that a protracted action was necessary and supported his proposal. If however, the Foreign Minister believed that within two or three days the situation

could be remedied by diplomatic means, then, even if this was doubtful, he must be given the opportunity.

Moshe Shapira supported waiting several days to avoid giving the Jordanians the opportunity to claim that Israel was acting before they had managed to make arrangements to implement the local commanders' agreement. The Foreign Ministry also needed a short interim to prepare its representatives for a retaliatory action. He seconded Eshkol's proposal to strengthen defense of the settlements.

Pinhas Rosen supported Sharett's proposal.

Dov Joseph favored action because, as he put it, in the Middle East one must not leave the impression that one does not react.

Joseph Serlin wanted to wait a number of days, in accordance with Sharett's proposal.

Summing up the debate, Ben-Gurion presented his proposal and asked the Government to authorize him to act and to conduct the retaliatory raid that very night.

Lavon proposed empowering the Defence Minister to take whatever action he deemed necessary as of the following Monday—that is, to wait till the date requested by the Foreign Minister.

Sharett asked whether the Foreign Ministry would be informed in advance of the operation. Ben-Gurion replied in the negative. He would not consult with the Foreign Minister or other members of the Government before taking action, but whatever he did would be in the Government's name.

Sharett seconded Lavon's proposal and stated that as long as he was serving as foreign minister he could not commit himself to avoid appealing certain decisions. Ben-Gurion replied that he could appeal like any other minister and promised to report on the situation to the Government whenever necessary.

The Government voted 9–2 to empower the Defence Minister to authorize, as of the beginning of the following week, retaliatory action for raids and murders carried out by persons who had infiltrated across the Israel-Jordan armistice lines.

262. M. Sharett to A. Eban (Washington) and E. Elath (London) (telegram). 11 June 1953

Notes

1. See No. 256.
2. See No. 261 (Editorial Note).
3. On Eban's activity in the spirit of Sharett's directives, see No. 264. Eban requested permission to talk with Hammarskjöld about removing De Ridder from his position.

(See Eban's telegram to Comay, 12 June 1953, 130.09/2310/2, and Comay's reply, telegram IW448, 14 June 1953, 93.01/2209/4.)

4. The section that was sent to London has been omitted here. It comprised two paragraphs: In the first, Sharett passed on Stevenson's remarks to Ben-Gurion (see No. 259, n. 1) to the effect that Glubb Pasha was prepared to meet with Israeli representatives. The second was similar to paragraph 7 above. For Elath's activities, see Nos. 267 and 272.

263. F. E. Shinnar (Cologne) to M. Sharett. 11 June 1953

Orig.: 130.02/2382/11

Shinnar reports on a 30-minute talk with Adenauer. Adenauer responded to his congratulations[1] in the following vein: (1) He sends his best wishes and esteem to the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. He is most grateful for Israel's appreciation and is sparing no effort to implement the reparations agreement. He regrets the impossibility of making good all the material damage suffered by the Jews. (2) He asked about Israel's relations with the Arabs and the prospects for peace. Shinnar explained that Israel has left no doubts as to its desire for peace, but the issue must be viewed from an Oriental perspective on time. (3) To Adenauer's question on the activities of Nazis in Egypt, Shinnar replied that, according to information available to Israel, the Nazis are trying to maintain a low profile, but their influence is quite evident among the military advisors. At Adenauer's request, Shinnar promised to provide him with information on this topic. (4) Adenauer asked for details on the latest coalition crisis in Israel, connected with the raising of the red flag;[2] Shinnar reassured him that there is no Communist threat in Israel. At the end of the meeting Shinnar raised issues relating to implementation of the reparations agreement. Adenauer urged Israel to turn to him on any matter in which his intervention was required by Israel. He asked about the mood of the Israel public about the reparations. Shinnar said that the oil arrangements had already had their impact on public opinion and he had no doubt that the flow of goods would further placate and mollify the skeptics.

Notes

1. Shinnar told him as follows: "Mr. Chancellor, I have the honor and great pleasure of conveying to Your Excellency Minister Sharett's greetings and his fervent wishes for the success of your efforts to establish understanding among peoples and preserve peace. The citizens of the State of Israel, all Jews, and the entire peace-loving world associate your name, Mr. Chancellor, with the reparations agreement, that unprecedented historical gesture made out of voluntary recognition and a deep sense of

moral responsibility. Israel, which is dependent on peace more than any other nation in the world, sincerely thanks you for the important contribution towards building peace—to which the citizens of our country devote themselves wholeheartedly—that is inherent in the reparations agreement. Permit me to add Mr. Sharett's personal wishes for your well-being and health, which I also endorse."

2. See No. 236, n. 5.

264. Ch. Herzog to the United States Division (telegram). 12 June 1953

Notes

1. See No. 262.
2. See No. 146.
3. See No. 253.

265. *Aide-Mémoire* from the Government of Israel to the Government of the United States. 12 June 1953

Notes

1. See No. 177 and n. 2 there.
2. The reference appears to be to a memorandum submitted to the Jordanians on 25 March. See No. 146.
3. See No. 219.
4. See No. 256.

266. Meeting: Ch. Herzog–'Abd al-Hamīd Ghālib (Washington, 12 June 1953)

93.08/357/2

Ghālib, the Egyptian military attaché in Washington, met with Herzog after returning from Cairo. He told Herzog that Naguib's position is becoming increasingly stable. Ghālib was furious with Churchill's speech, which he felt was meant to undermine Dulles's efforts in the region. He added that the Egyptian government has decided not to retreat on the Suez issue.

The conflict with Israel: Ghālib reiterated that Egypt has no aggressive intentions towards Israel; nor is Egypt in a position to undertake hostile actions. Herzog replied that every conciliatory statement such as this was

usually balanced by a conflicting announcement made elsewhere. Israel is not impressed by Egyptian declarations; only deeds, such as lifting the blockade on Israeli passage through the Suez Canal or abrogating the economic boycott, could prove the sincerity of his statements. Ghālib made it clear that at the present juncture no Arab country can afford to conclude a separate peace treaty with Israel, and the sooner Israel understands this the better. Herzog explained that he was not thinking in terms of a peace treaty, but rather of a cessation of hostile acts by Egypt. To this too Ghālib replied that no Arab country is willing to act alone in abrogating the boycott. Herzog tried to explain that there is no historical rationale tying Egypt to the Arab world; Egypt's immediate interest is to resolve its conflict with Britain. Moreover, if it reached an accord with Israel, the latter could help generate pro-Egyptian sympathy in U.S. public opinion. Ghālib attacked Israel for opposing military aid to Egypt and blamed Israeli lobbying for its failure to receive such aid. He asserted that Israel's actions in this matter belie its declarations of good will. Herzog replied that the Egyptians hold the key to ending such Israeli activities. Ghālib retorted that, if necessary, Egypt could manage without American weaponry.

Refugees: Ghālib said that an Israeli declaration recognizing the refugees' right of return is more important than their actual repatriation.

U.S. Jewry: Ghālib said that the Egyptian embassy closely follows the activities of U.S. Jewry, but finds the multiplicity of organizations and institutions confusing. Herzog reassured him that even the Israelis are not completely *au fait* with the aims and tendencies of every Jewish organization in America.

Notes

1. See No. 209, n. 1.
2. Two words have been omitted here.

267. E. Elath (London) to M. Sharett. 13 June 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2319/3

In accordance with Sharett's instructions,[1] Elath has informed Bowker of Israel's concern at the possible outcome of the situation along the Jordanian border, should the Jordanians not demonstrate genuine and sincere intent to control it. Bowker expressed his astonishment that Israel had not given the Jordanians a chance to implement the local commanders' agreement. He said he knew that the Jordanians are making an effort to prevent infiltration into Israel. He promised to relay Elath's message to his superiors.

Notes

1. See No. 262.
2. In the first telegram (D818), Comay reported that at the emergency session of the Mixed Armistice Commission on 11 June, Jordan was condemned for the penetration of infiltrators into Kefar Hess. Its government was called upon to take immediate measures to put an end to the attacks, which had caused dangerous tension between the two sides. The number of the second telegram seems to have been scrambled. A telegram numbered D836 was sent on 16 June 1953 (both telegrams can be found in File 130.09/2319/2).
3. See No. 262.
4. Compare Bowker's report of 13 June 1953, PRO, FO371/104783. The report was sent to Churchill, who forwarded it in a letter to Britain's ambassador in Israel. Copies were sent to the British representatives in the Arab capitals, in Paris, Ankara, Washington, and elsewhere.

268. Editorial Note

Delivery of a Note Verbale *from the Government of the Soviet Union*

On 15 June, the Soviet ambassador in Sofia, Mikhail Bodrov, read the following *note verbale* to Israel's chargé d'affaires in Sofia, Gershon Avner, and the first secretary in the legation, Ben-Zion Razin. He read it in Russian and Razin translated it into Hebrew. The translated document printed here was appended to Razin's letter to Levavi, 16 June 1953, 130.11/2507/2.

269. *Note Verbale* from the Government of the U.S.S.R. 15 June 1953

130.11/2507/2

On 15 June, the Soviet ambassador in Sofia delivered the following statement to the Israeli representatives:

With regard to the first part of the draft letter by the Government of Israel,[2] it is my duty to state that the Soviet Government expresses its dissatisfaction with the statement by the Government of Israel that the criminals who perpetrated the terrorist act against the legation staff and their families have not yet been apprehended.

As to the statement included in the draft letter by the Government of Israel to the effect that the Government of Israel is not of the opinion that the maintenance of diplomatic relations between two countries must be conditional on the attitude of either of the countries to contemporary international problems, such a statement is apparently based on a mis-

understanding, since my reply during my conversation with you on 2 June provided no basis for such a statement.

As you know, in our meeting on 2 June, I said as follows: "In connection with Mr. Avner's statement that the Government of Israel has always sought and continues to seek friendly relations with the Soviet Union, it is to be expected that such an aspiration be reflected in the foreign policy of the Government of Israel. The renewal and maintenance of normal relations between the U.S.S.R. and Israel is inextricably linked with the position of the Government of Israel on military pacts and agreements directed against the U.S.S.R. If the Israeli government wishes to affirm its statement on relations with the Soviet Union, then, for the sake of peace, it must promise to refrain from participation in alliances and agreements directed against the Soviet Union."

Thus my answer did not relate in any fashion to the position adopted by the Government of Israel on contemporary international problems in general, as stated in the draft letter, but rather to the attitude of the Government of Israel to pacts and agreements directed against the U.S.S.R. and to its commitment not to participate in pacts and agreements of this kind. Accordingly, the draft letter by the Government of Israel must be amended.

The concluding section of the draft letter does not tally with the statement you conveyed during your conversation with me on 28 May 1953,[3] which contained the request by the Government of Israel to renew diplomatic relations between our countries. Since the proposal for renewed diplomatic relations between Israel and the U.S.S.R. came at the initiative of the Government of Israel, this must be reflected in the letter by the Government of Israel. On the other hand, there is no need for the letter by the Government of Israel to refer to the willingness of the Government of the U.S.S.R. to comply with the request of the Government of Israel, since this will be stated in the reply by the Government of the Soviet Union.

Notes

1. See No. 249.
2. See No. 245 (Editorial Note).
3. See No. 236.

270. United States Division (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 15 June 1953

Coded Tel.: IWA451; Outg.: 130.09/2309/13

In a meeting with Comay, Russell delivered a message from Dulles to Ben-

Gurion expressing satisfaction at the renewal of the local commanders' agreement and congratulating him on this "statesmanlike step."

In the course of the conversation Russell reported that Glubb has undertaken to do everything in his power to maintain quiet along the border.

Comay said that he is waiting to hear from Riley about his overture to the Jordanian government concerning high-level talks. Russell reported that on a recent night American cars on the Jerusalem–Tel Aviv highway had been shot at. Comay expressed his regret and promised that the police will look into the matter.

Notes

1. The note can be found in File 130.16/2948/12.
2. See No. 256.
3. See No. 262.
4. See No. 257.

271. E. Najar (Tel Aviv) to W. Eytan. 16 June 1953

Orig.: 130.02/2413/9

Najar reports on a conversation the previous day with the French ambassador to Israel. He gave Gilbert a detailed picture of developments with the Jordanians and told him that, for the time being, Israel is not seeking French intervention in Amman. Gilbert voiced concern at developments along the Israel-Jordan border. During his last visit to Amman he had noted the strong criticism of the Arab Legion by the Jordanian and Palestinian population. They claim that the Legion is controlled by Britain and neither wishes nor is able to serve the country's interests. Gilbert is convinced that this situation prompted Glubb to intervene actively. The French are convinced that the British are not interested in peace between Jordan and Israel. On the contrary, they would rather prolong this unhealthy state of affairs, but without being dragged into a serious military conflict. Gilbert reiterated that if Israel is contemplating a limited military operation to clean up the frontier, it should be prepared for serious clashes with the Legion. Although he cannot imagine an Israeli defeat, Israel ought to take suitable precautions before launching a military strike.

The conversation then turned to the Arab collective security pact. Gilbert said that the Quai d'Orsay believes that the Americans want to use the Arab League and the Arab collective security pact as a means of organizing regional defense. The French assume that Churchill will encourage rather than oppose this American policy. Britain, the only European nation with

military bases in three Arab countries, believes it can hold on to them within a pan-Arab organizational framework. The French are aware of considerable British activity in Syria. At the Bermuda conference, France will try to prove that nothing is to be gained by uniting the Arabs, but they know in advance that they are in the minority on this subject.

272. E. Elath to M. Comay (telegram). 16 June 1953

Notes

1. See No. 256.
2. See No. 267.
3. Cf. the report on the meeting drawn up by Ross, in the document entitled: "Israel-Jordan Borders: 16 June 1953," PRO, FO271/104784; cf. also the telegram from the Foreign Office to the British Embassy in Tel Aviv, 16 June 1953, ibid.

273. M. Comay (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 18 June 1953.

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2319/2

In the wake of complaints voiced by British representatives that Israel is not relating seriously to the meetings between local commanders, Comay reports to the missions[1] on the situation since the commanders' agreement was signed:[2] Meetings between local commanders have been held at various border points. Telephone lines have been installed at some points, while a radio link has been set up at others. In accordance with the agreement, at these meetings the Israelis have provided details about infiltrators and gang leaders. At the first meetings at three border points, Israel handed over infiltrators who had entered Israel, while Jordan handed over Israeli Arabs. Since then, they have been discussing the establishment of several more meeting points. Israel has been represented by its local commander at all the meetings, whereas the Jordanians have sent more junior officers.

At the meetings held after the incidents at Tirat Yehuda, Mishmar Ayalon, and Kefar Hess,[3] Israel's representatives provided information that could have led to the arrest of the perpetrators, but the Jordanians did nothing.

Notes

1. The telegram was sent also to London, Paris, and Rome.

2. See Nos. 267 and 272.
3. See No. 262

274. M. Comay to the Israel Embassies in Washington and London (telegram). 19 June 1953

Notes

1. In an interview with a *New York Times* correspondent, published on 18 June, Glubb, the commander of the Arab Legion, accused Israel of acts of provocation against Jordan and of conducting a campaign of false propaganda. He ascribed four motives to Israel's policy: (1) territorial ambitions; (2) a psychological need on the part of Jews to bully others; (3) the connection in Israel's mind between the Arab threat to it and financial support from the United States; (4) stifling domestic political opposition. Glubb claimed that, during the five years since the end of the war, Jordanian military personnel had not been involved in border incidents, whereas nearly every Israeli attack had been perpetrated by Israeli soldiers, never by unorganized civilians. He also claimed that the murders committed in Israeli border settlements were perpetrated by Jewish terrorist groups, directly continuing the Irgun actions against the British. According to him, most of the infiltration incidents should be dealt with by the police. He blamed Israel for not cooperating in the transfer of the information required to punish the infiltrators.
2. See No. 272.
3. Compare Moore's report on the meeting in two telegrams to the Foreign Office, 19 June 1953, PRO, FO371/104784.

275. Editorial Note

Government Meeting on the Border Incidents, 21 June 1953

Sharett reported on the results of diplomatic activity relating to the border incidents. He pointed out that in the week since the previous Government meeting (see No. 261) there had been no incidents of cross-border infiltration. The incidents had now been renewed, however, and people had been killed.

Sharett and Ben-Gurion disagreed about the best way to safeguard the country's borders. Ben-Gurion deprecated the value of diplomatic endeavors and stressed the importance of military action. He promised to submit a plan to the Government for setting up a border police force, but emphasized the importance of cross-border military action. Sharett made it plain that he, too, believed that the Powers would not act in Israel's stead. Nevertheless, there were cases in which diplomatic activity should also be invoked.

276. Ch. Herzog (Washington) to A. Eban. 21 June 1953

Orig.: 93.08/361/8

In light of the ongoing debates in the Embassy concerning the line Israel should adopt on the subject of military assistance, Herzog presents his view. He disagrees with Shiloah's view that Israel should oppose military aid to the Arabs even if this caused Israel itself to be denied aid. He also dissents from those who argue that Israel should stand firm as to the character and type of aid granted the Arabs. In his opinion, the involvement of military echelons, after aid has been approved in principle, is to Israel's advantage, since the military is less concerned with political issues than with economic-military considerations, where Israel has an edge over the Arabs. Herzog rejects the idea that Israel was instrumental in preventing military aid to Egypt. He thinks it was the British who tipped the balance. With regard to military assistance to Iraq and Syria, Israel has no allies as influential as the British; hence the odds are against Israel's being able to prevent military aid to Iraq. If the Syrians do not themselves receive arms they will oppose such shipments to Iraq. Israeli opposition to military aid to Syria, therefore, is not likely to bear fruit. Herzog believes that Dulles, during his visit to Damascus, has already reached agreement on this matter with Shishakli.

Herzog concludes that Israel's decision should be based on the General Staff's assessment of the Syrian threat, but he recommends that Israel emphasize its own need for military aid rather than its opposition to such aid to Iraq and Syria. He also recommends that Israel decide what form it wants the aid to take. He adds that should Israel decide to oppose U.S. military aid to Syria, its strategy should leave room for political maneuvering. Herzog cautions against a situation in which Israeli opposition would lead the U.S. to withhold military aid from both Israel and Syria.

Notes

1. See No. 257.
2. See Nos. 4 and 6.

277. Editorial Note

Submission of the Draft of a Note from the Government of Israel to the Government of the Soviet Union, 22 June 1953

On 22 June, Israel's representatives handed the draft note on renewal of re-

lations to the Soviet ambassador in Sofia. The ambassador said that he would transmit it to his government and that it seemed likely that the notes would be signed by the foreign ministers. He added that he knew that his government wished to resolve the issue of relations with Israel and to return to the path of friendship. (The draft note is appended to Razin's letter to Levavi, 2 July 1953, 130.11/2507/5. For more details on the meeting, see the telegram from the Israel legation in Sofia to the Foreign Ministry, 22 June 1953, ibid.) At another meeting, on 27 June, the Soviets responded to the proposed text and passed on the draft of their reply. See No. 282 and n. 5 there. See also No. 288 and n. 4 there, and No. 289.

278. E. Elath to M. Comay (telegram). 22 June 1953

Notes

1. In both telegrams, Comay directed Elath to convey to the Foreign Office Israel's condemnation of Glubb Pasha's remarks in the interview published in the *New York Times* (see No. 274 and n. 1 there). In particular, he was to emphasize that if the British government wished the Israeli public to distinguish between Glubb's opinion and British policy, it must publicly disassociate itself from his remarks (telegrams of 21 June, in Files 130.09/2319/2 and 130.09/2377/1).
2. See No. 272.
3. Compare Bowker's report on the meeting, in a document dated 22 June, PRO, FO371/104784.

279. A. Eban to M. Sharett. 22 June 1953

Notes

1. See No. 247.
2. In this letter, Eban requested U.S. assistance in two parallel solutions to the problem of Israel's short-term debt: first, the release of the remaining $7 million due Israel from the grant money for that year, in order to cover Israel's immediate debts; second, a comprehensive solution based on rescheduling the debts by means of a loan from the Export-Import Bank, which would convert the short-term debt into a single long-term loan (130.20/2485/6).
3. See No. 257.
4. Should read: "6 June."
5. See Nos. 304 and 312.
6. The letters (Stassen to Eban, 20 June 1953, 130.02/2420/18; Eban to Stassen, 22 June 1953, 130.20/2485/6) have been omitted here.

280. Guidelines by the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Tel Aviv). 23 June 1953

130.11/2512/24

Sharett gives details about the transfer of the Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem and instructs the heads of missions on how to present the issue in the countries where they are posted:

(1) First of all, they should make it clear that the Government is unshakable in its resolve to transfer the Ministry to the capital, and that the move will be made in the near future. No specific date should be mentioned, however.

(2) The entire Ministry will be transferred, except for the Research Division, which will remain in Tel Aviv. During the transition period, a temporary bureau will stay behind for liaison with the foreign missions.

(3) After the transfer has been implemented, the Foreign Ministry will publish a communiqué to this effect. Until such time, they must avail themselves of every opportunity during talks with members of the diplomatic corps to explain the reasons for the move. They should not initiate meetings or talks expressly for this purpose, but should seize every available opportunity, as stated.

(4) They should stress first and foremost that the transfer in no way represents a calculated political move or a fundamental innovation; rather it is one more practical step in an inevitable development. Jerusalem has been serving as Israel's capital for three years now and is the seat of almost all government ministries and state institutions (the Knesset, the President's residence, the Supreme Court), except for the Foreign Ministry. Israel has repeatedly declared its intention to transfer the Foreign Ministry. Now that it is doing so, the act should not be construed as creating a new political fact but rather as the implementation of a government decision.

(5) The rationale for the transfer is simple. In no other country are all government ministries located in one city and the Foreign Ministry in another. The Ministry's isolation from Jerusalem has hindered its operations and efficiency, leading to unconsidered decisions, a constant need to revise past decisions, complaints about lack of coordination, and so on. The frequent journeys of Ministry staff between the two cities disrupts their routine and slows down and impedes their work. Much time and money have been wasted.

(6) The foreign representatives themselves, and not only the Israeli government, are victimized by this system. They are not on the spot when important decisions are taken, and unnecessary duplication of work and tiresome misunderstandings are created.

(7) The Foreign Minister has suffered grievously from the situation.

Constant travel back and forth between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv has become a permanent feature of his life. His personal work capacity has been adversely affected by the frequent commuting. On several occasions he has been unable to attend important Knesset sessions, ministerial consultations, and the like.

(8) The main hardship is the Foreign Ministry's sense of isolation and detachment. It is hampered by its exclusion from the main theater of government and distance from the center of power. Its influence has been weakened and staff morale has suffered.

(9) They should be careful to emphasize that just as nontransfer of the Ministry has not facilitated internationalization, neither will transfer impede it.

(10) Transfer of the Foreign Ministry has no bearing whatsoever, from the international perspective, on custodianship of the Holy Places. Sharett's speech in the Knesset[2] made this point clear. They should explain that just as the Foreign Ministry's location outside Jerusalem has not helped the United Nations assert stewardship over the Holy Places, its presence there will not prevent it. Moreover, from the perspective of domestic politics, transferring the Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem can only safeguard the Holy Places and help Israel fulfill its international commitments. Should the Foreign Ministry remain in Tel Aviv, the Government might be less sensitive to its responsibility for the Holy Places than if it were in Jerusalem.

(11) Israel hopes that foreign missions will also move to Jerusalem, but will not try to compel them to do so.

(12) Assuming that the missions would ultimately move to Jerusalem, Israel is prepared to view their continued presence outside Jerusalem as temporary and not insist on rigorous adherence to diplomatic protocol.

(13) An Arab outcry against the transfer can be taken for granted. Hence they must be on the alert for and condemn fabrications in Arab propaganda. They must emphasize that the Arab countries have no special interest in Jerusalem as such, and that their "concern" for the fate of the Christian Holy Places is mere sham and hypocrisy.

Notes

1. A preliminary note to the memorandum stated that it was written shortly before Sharett left for his vacation on 21 June.
2. The discussion of Israel's foreign policy that took place during the Knesset debate on the Foreign Ministry budget (15–17 June). In his speech on 17 June, Sharett said the following concerning the Holy Places: "There is no contradiction between Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem and the satisfaction of international expectations concerning the Holy Places in the city. To the extent that a practical international problem is involved, the only solution is a clear distinction between the status of Jerusa-

lem as a capital city and the status of the Holy Places within it. . . . On several occasions we have declared . . . that we are well aware of the responsibility imposed upon us by the fact that sites holy to the Christian religion are located in sovereign Israeli territory in Jerusalem. The Government of Israel has stated that it assumes full responsibility for their security, preserving their immunity, and ensuring free access to them—limited only by suitable security arrangements—and for permitting undisturbed freedom of worship there. . . . We have met this obligation fully, to the best of our ability. . . . The Government of Israel endeavors not only to meet its obligations towards the Holy Places under its jurisdiction, it also facilitates passage by members of the Christian faith, whether residents of Israel or persons from abroad, from Israeli Jerusalem to the territory held by Jordan in order to visit and pray in the Holy Places located there *(Divrei ha-Knesset*, Second Session of the Second Knesset, Vol. XIV, p. 1641).

281. A. Eban to H. Byroade. 23 June 1953

Notes

1. See No. 274, n. 1.
2. See No. 285.

282. G. Avner and B. Razin (Sofia) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 28 June 1953

Coded Tel.: 84; Inc.: 130.11/2507/5

Razin and Avner report on their conversation with the Soviet ambassador in Sofia. The ambassador asked that the letter drafted by Israel[1] be signed by the Israeli foreign minister and addressed to the Soviet foreign minister. He made several comments on its wording and requested that corrections be made. He gave them the Russian text of the proposed Soviet reply, as follows:

> As is known, on 9 February criminal elements planted a bomb on the grounds of the U.S.S.R. legation in Tel Aviv. As a result, a staff member and relatives of staff members were seriously wounded. In this context the Soviet Union recalled its minister and diplomats and severed diplomatic relations with Israel. On 28 May, the State of Israel proposed to the Government of the Soviet Union the resumption of relations between the two countries.[2] The Government of the Soviet Union, having considered this proposal, noted the expression of profound sorrow and apology by the Government of Israel for the criminal act as well as its statement that, although the search for the culprits has not yet borne fruit, the Government of Israel continues to seek them in order to arrest

them and put them on trial. The Government of the Soviet Union also noted the statement by the Government of Israel that it will not be a party to any agreement or alliance with aggressive intentions towards the Soviet Union. Taking into account the promises made by the Government of Israel and in accordance with its policy of maintaining normal relations with other states and strengthening cooperation among peoples, the Soviet Union deems it possible to renew diplomatic relations with the Government of Israel.

Avner and Razin commented that this letter was devoid of cordial expressions towards Israel. The ambassador promised to cable Moscow to this effect.

Notes

1. The meeting took place on 27 June. See Razin to Levavi, 2 July 1953, 130.11/2507/5.
2. See No. 277 (Editorial Note).
3. Cf. Nos. 245, 246, and 269.
4. Cf. No. 236; see also Avner's criticism of the Soviet interpretation of Israel's initiative to renew relations, No. 287, paragraph 2.
5. Cf. the final version of the Soviet note, Nos. 289 and 298.
6. Levavi agreed to the text that Razin and Avner proposed in the first paragraph of the telegram and also to the Soviet proposal to publicize the exchange of notes (telegram SO80, 2 July 1953, 130.11/2507/5). See also No. 288.

283. W. Eytan (Tel Aviv) to M. Makleff. 28 June 1953

Copy: 130.02/2432/3

In advance of the forthcoming meeting of Israeli and Jordanian commanders,[1] Eytan outlines the Foreign Ministry's position. He believes that they should base themselves on the first paragraph of the local commanders' agreement,[2] whereby both sides undertake to instruct local authorities and commanders in the field to prevent illegal crossing of the armistice line. They should stress that since the agreement was signed infiltration incidents have continued; this clearly indicates that Jordan has failed to take effective steps to prevent them. Nor has it implemented the other paragraphs of the agreement. For example, although Israel conveyed to the Jordanian representatives details of incidents and infiltrators, the Jordanians have not punished the offenders or taken steps to prevent further incidents.

Eytan believes that the Israeli representatives should propose territorial exchange in areas such as Qalqiliya, so as to obviate the necessity for the

villagers to cross Israeli territory to get to their fields. An agreement in principle on this issue was reached some time ago. They could also propose partitioning no-man's land, although such a division has no direct connection with infiltration incidents. It is also important to schedule additional high-level meetings. Eytan proposes that at the first meeting high-level they restrict themselves to a direct discussion of infiltration and border incidents and leave other topics for later meetings.

Notes

1. See No. 286.
2. See No. 256.

284. E. Ben-Horin (Washington) to the United States Division. 30 June 1953

Copy: 93.08/358/3

Ben-Horin reports on a talk between Goitein and Jernegan at which he and Waller were also present. The conversation focused on military aid to Arab countries, in the light of Dulles's speech,[1] Byroade's conversation with Eban,[2] and the Associated Press dispatch.[3] After consultations within the Israeli Embassy, it was decided for the present to oppose the very idea of arms supplies to an Arab country, and that a compromise proposal, such as simultaneous weapons delivery to Israel, should not be put forward.

Goitein expressed his concern at the press report that the U.S. government intends to supply arms to Arab countries. Israel is worried that such weapons might be used against it, given Arab statements about liquidating Israel. He is appalled that, according to the AP article, the Arabs are to receive weapons immediately, but Israel only at a later stage. Goitein said that Israel discerns no signs of Arab support for the West, which is an American prerequisite for supplying arms. There is also no guarantee that the Arabs would honor the second commitment demanded by the United Sates, namely, that the weapons not be used offensively. He recalled an explicit statement by the president of Lebanon to a journalist two years ago, to the effect that there is no guarantee that the commitment not to use American weapons offensively would not be violated one day. Goitein concluded by stating that his government has authorized him to demand that the United States refrain from supplying weapons to Arab countries until they demonstrate their willingness to live in peace with Israel and to join the efforts of the West and Israel to forestall aggression from outside the region. If the United States wants to bring peace to the Middle East,

supplying weapons to the Arabs is not the way to achieve this objective.

Jernegan replied that he was well aware of everything Goitein had said, and that in practice there has been no change in U.S. policy on this issue. Middle East security is weak and the United Stated believes it must be bolstered. The United States has abandoned the idea of a Middle East Defense Organization and is thinking instead in terms of selective cooperation with Arab countries. Syria and Iraq are possible partners, as are Pakistan and Israel. Egypt would be a candidate were it not for its problems with Britain. He added that the Associated Press article was not accurate. The U.S. government is not willing to declare that it will supply equipment to Arab countries only if Israel is simultaneously furnished similar equipment. Though it is possible that the Arab countries may receive arms first, there is no plan to this effect. The difference between Israel's approach and that of the State Department is one of judgment. Whereas Israel wants the United States to stipulate that the Arabs take definite steps towards peace and believes that, failing this, military aid to Arab countries would endanger Israel and merely intensify Arab intransigence, the State Department believes that imposing conditions in advance is liable to prejudice the shared goal of strengthening regional security; it is preferable to supply a limited quantity of arms and monitor developments. Afterwards, the State Department "will play it by ear." In any case, any arms the United States supplies to the Arabs over the coming three years will not constitute a danger to Israel. Some of the arms will go to Pakistan, which poses no threat to Israel. Furthermore, the weapons will not be delivered for another year or two, and only after Congress approves the military assistance appropriation.

Goitein argued that from a psychological point of view the American approach is completely mistaken. Israel does not expect the Arabs to sign a peace treaty with it immediately, but it is demanding a tangible improvement in relations before the Arab armies are strengthened. Jernegan's contention that scattering this quantity of weaponry among the various Arab countries does not constitute a serious threat to Israel's security is unfounded. Ever since the war, the Arabs have been trying to pass themselves off as deficient in military equipment, so as to justify large-scale weapons purchases and requests for free military aid from the United States. The Syrian army is arming itself intensively; the idea of "poor, weak Syria" is nothing but a myth. When the issue is Israel, the Arab countries cooperate fully. It cannot be claimed that their military hardware is inferior to Israel's. What Israel expects the Arab countries to do in exchange for American arms is to lift the economic boycott. The State Department has the means to exert pressure on the Arabs and should make use of them. The Arab countries must demonstrate their good intentions and desire for peace, just as Israel is manifesting its good intentions.

Jernegan promised to relay the arguments to his superiors. Speaking in a

personal capacity, he said that he does not believe that the State Department will comply with Israel's request.

Goitein concludes from this talk that a final decision has already been taken at a high level, and apparently also by the National Security Council, and there is no prospect of altering it. Israel's arguments were evidently weighed and rejected prior to the decision.

Notes

1. See No. 243 (Editorial Note).
2. See No. 257.
3. According to an article in the *New York Times*, the U.S. government had decided to propose to the Arab countries separate agreements for the supply of military equipment, in order to bolster the defense of the Middle East against Communism.

285. H. Byroade to A. Eban. 30 June 1953

Notes

1. See No. 281.
2. See No. 256.
3. See No. 46, n. 1.
4. See No. 180 and n. 1 there, and No. 230.
5. See No. 264.
6. The letter was evidently drafted by Byroade before he received the report on the local commanders' meeting held 29 June (see No. 286).

286. A. Lourie to the Embassies of Israel in London and Washington (telegram). 30 June 1953

Notes

1. Dayan pointed to three main zones of infiltration and raised proposals for overcoming the problem of infiltration in each of them. (1) 'Idna (Beit Guvrin area): a clear demarcation of the armistice line, relocation of the Tarqumiya refugee camp, and intensified supervision of the residents; (2) Jerusalem: apprehension of a number of gangs active in the area, about which Israel had already conveyed information to Jordan; (3) the Qalqiliya-Tulkarm salient: preventing the National Guard from helping the infiltrators and moving persons involved in robbery and infiltration away from the border. (For a summary of the meeting, see A. Shalev to the Foreign Ministry, 30 June 1953, 130.02/2429/5.)

2. 'Inab rejected Dayan's proposal. At 'Idna, he said, the border had been demarcated two years ago. As for the refugees, there was no possibility of relocating them, whether from there or from the Qalqiliya area. Nor was this the appropriate remedy for the situation, since the infiltrators did not necessarily live near the border and could continue infiltrating from farther away. He also rejected the accusation that the Jordanian police were cooperating with the infiltrators in the Tulkarm and Qalqiliya sector (ibid.).
3. At the meeting, which was postponed to 9 July, the parties began drafting proposals for a campaign against infiltration (see Eytan's telegrams to the Embassy in Washington, 7 and 10 July 1953, 130.09/2309/14, as well as the Jordanian and Israeli draft proposals appended to the letter sent by the staff officer on the Mixed Armistice Commission to the Foreign Ministry, 15 July 1953 [130.02/2429/5]). The next meeting was held on 21 July. See No. 311.

287. G. Avner (Sofia) to A. Levavi. 1 July 1953

Copy: 130.11/2503/8

Avner analyzes the stages in the negotiations with the Soviets concerning renewal of relations, as well as a number of points concerning the future: (1) On the basis of remarks by the Soviet[1] and Czechoslovak[2] ambassadors in Sofia, during April 1953, Avner concluded that already in March or the first half of April Moscow had decided in principle on the renewal of relations. The first feelers were put out to Israel in May.[3] (2) The text of the Soviet government's response to Israel, which was shown to Avner and Razin during their last meeting with the Soviet ambassador,[4] stated that it was Israel who had approached the Soviet Union, on 28 May. Avner rejects this assertion on the basis of point (1) above. (3) Avner reproaches Levavi and faults Foreign Ministry procedures in the drafting of the paragraph in the Israeli note dealing with Israel's participation in anti-Soviet alliances. During the course of the give-and-take with the Soviets, the Foreign Ministry retreated from its initial political commitment, although there had been no political change that might justify such a step. The Soviets did not behave in this fashion during the negotiations over the wording of the expressions of friendship to be included in their note. (4) Avner believes that the Soviet decision to renew ties with Israel is part of a broader strategy to place their diplomatic relations and missions on a more normal footing in those countries where this is not the case. Israel is merely one such country. The Soviets apparently believe that such a formal step can persuade world public opinion that the U.S.S.R. seeks peace. They want to lay the groundwork and create favorable public opinion for major gains in the international arena. Avner thinks they want a "second Yalta," that is, a global agreement based on the status quo of the two blocs, which would provide the Russians with guarantees against Western aggression. On the

other hand, when it comes to internal affairs, such as emigration, the Soviets are far more chary and will not change their policy. Therefore, Avner concludes, the renewal of relations will not lead to any significant gains for Jews in the Soviet Union or its satellites. Nevertheless, he suggests that the Foreign Ministry ask Churchill to raise the issues of Israel and Russian Jewry in his talks with the Soviets. The gambit is worth a try even if there is no guarantee of success.

Avner recommends reshaping relations with the Soviet Union. To this end, certain steps must be taken upon the renewal of ties: (a) The press should be instructed not to rake up past accounts when resumption of relations is announced. (b) The Foreign Ministry should immediately instruct all missions in Eastern Europe to convey official written notification of the content of the two notes to the foreign ministries of the countries to which they are accredited. (c) The Ministry should instruct the heads of missions in Eastern Europe to pay a courtesy call on the Soviet ambassadors or chargés d'affaires. (d) The Ministry should instruct its representatives in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Rumania to call on the foreign ministries of those countries within ten days of the announcement of the resumption of relations and raise once again Israeli claims on issues such as family reunification, the release of Oren and Orenstein, and the departure of the group of Jewish emigrants from Hungary.

Notes

1. See No. 157, n. 2; see also No. 154 (Editorial Note).
2. See No. 168.
3. See No. 216 and nn. 1 and 2 there. Cf. M. Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. 1, pp. 64 and 79.
4. See No. 282 and n. 3 there.
5. See No. 236.
6. See No. 282, paragraph 1; cf. the text of Israel's proposal in No. 249.
7. Levavi suggested explaining to the Soviets the differences between Israel's drafts of 5 June and 22 June, with regard to their demand that Israel undertake not to participate in pacts and alliances directed against the Soviet Union, "by claiming, in part, that these are differences of phrasing rather than of substance." (See Levavi's telegram to the Israel Legation in Sofia, 24 June 1953, 130.11/2507/5; see also the exchange of telegrams between Avner and Levavi, 1 and 2 July 1953, 130.11/2507/5.)
8. Compare No. 246.
9. See No. 250.
10. *Sic.* Perhaps should read: "It is true. . . ."
11. See No. 209, n. 1.

288. Note from M. Sharett to V. Molotov. 6 July 1953

Notes

1. For the sequence of events that led to the resumption of relations with the Soviet Union and the dispatch of the present document, see No. 287 and notes there, and No. 277 (Editorial Note). The note was handed to the Soviet ambassador in Sofia on 13 July (see Razin to Levavi, 13 July 1953, 130.11/2507/5).
2. See No. 71 (Editorial Note).
3. See Vol. 6, Nos. 501 and 521.
4. The last two words did not appear in the draft that Israel's representatives submitted to the Soviet ambassador in Sofia (see No. 277), but were added at his request. See No. 282, paragraph 1, and nn. 3 and 5 there.
5. For Molotov's reply, see No. 298.

289. G. Avner and B. Razin (Sofia) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 7 July 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.11/2507/5

Avner and Razin report to Levavi that at a reception given by the Soviet ambassador in Sofia, the latter asked them, in front of all present, why there had been a delay in submitting the Israeli note. He stressed that he wanted to speed up the matter and bring it to a conclusion. Razin did not tell him that the note is on the way[1] but did ask why there has been no Soviet response to Israel's request that a paragraph be added to their reply, expressing friendship with Israel. The ambassador said that he had passed on Israel's request to his government and would let him know when he had an answer.

Avner and Razin request instructions: whether to inform the ambassador that the note is en route, merely to hint that this is the case, or to say they are first awaiting a Soviet reply.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 288 and n. 1 there.
2. In his reply, Sharett directed Razin to meet immediately with the Soviet ambassador and inform him as follows: (1) The ambassador himself had said that the expression of friendship towards Israel would appear in their note. (2) This detail was missing from the last version they sent (see No. 282). (3) Expressions of friendship would remain in the Israeli note, whatever the final version submitted by the Soviets. (4) The ambassador was requested to inform his government in good time that in the final Soviet version Israel expected to find an expression of friendly relations, in line

with the Israeli text and as promised (Sharett to Avner, telegram 83, 7 July 1953, 130.11/2507/5). Avner and Razin passed on Sharett's message; in a meeting on 14 July, the Soviet ambassador informed them of his government's agreement to revise the last paragraph of Molotov's note and presented them with the new version. See Avner and Razin's telegram to the Foreign Ministry, SO98, 14 July 1953, 130.11/2507/5; cf. No. 298, n. 4.

290. M. Sharett (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 8 July 1953

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2319/4

Sharett instructs the mission heads how to explain the transfer of the Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem:

(1) They should see to press coverage and make sure that at least one article appears in a leading paper, such as *The Times* or *Le Monde*, but with no mention of the imminence of the transfer or, as far as possible, references to Israeli sources.

(2) The main thrust of the argument should be as follows: (a) Jerusalem has been Israel's capital and seat of government since late 1949. Hence transferring the Foreign Ministry is not a new departure but the inevitable conclusion of a natural process. (b) In no country in the world is the Foreign Ministry located outside the capital. This division has hampered the Foreign Ministry's work. This point should be elaborated as far as possible. (c) It has been demonstrated beyond any doubt that internationalization is unfeasible, wherever the Foreign Ministry is located. On 4 May 1952 the Government of Israel announced its decision to transfer the Ministry. The 1952 General Assembly had said nothing new on the Jerusalem issue and there is no point in further delaying the move. (d) The transfer does not infringe upon the status of the Holy Places. The Government of Israel has always declared its agreement to international supervision of the Holy Places, and the Foreign Minister reaffirmed this in the Knesset last June.[1] Just as the absence of the Foreign Ministry from Jerusalem has not facilitated the institution of international supervision of religious sites, its presence will not hinder the establishment of such an agency, should this prove necessary. If anyone is hindering the establishment of such a body it is the Jordanian government, which controls the most important Holy Places. (e) The move itself does not constrain foreign governments to move their missions to Jerusalem, but the Government of Israel hopes that they will do so, as this would be beneficial to the missions themselves. (f) The hope may be expressed that the Jerusalem issue will ultimately be solved through an arrangement for supervision of the Holy Places, but this line should not be encouraged.

Note

1. See No. 280, n. 2.

291. Note from the Ambassador of Israel in Washington to the Secretary of State of the United States. 9 July 1953

Notes

1. Yaacov Shimoni and Esther Herlitz presented the note to Parker Hart of the State Department on 9 July. See Shimoni's report on their meeting, 16 July 1953, 93.08/361/16.
2. See No. 243 (Editorial Note).

292. Note from W. Eytan to the Heads of the Foreign Missions in Israel. 10 July 1953

Notes

1. See Vol. 7, No. 135.
2. See Vol. 4, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, pp. 281–82.
3. The appendix has been omitted here. See also No. 280, n. 2.

293. E. Elath (London) to A. Lourie. 10 July 1953

Coded Tel.: L10784; Inc.: 130.09/2319/5

Elath reports on his conversation with Nutting on the supply of tanks, after learning from the Vickers Armstrong company that the decision is subject to Foreign Office approval. Nutting told him that the matter is being reviewed and promised a speedy answer. Although most friendly, he would not commit himself on the nature of the decision to be taken.[1]

Note

1. In early 1953, Israel submitted to Britain a list of military equipment it wished to acquire, including Centurion tanks. Israel also submitted arms procurement lists to France and the United States. All three countries were afraid that fulfilling Israel's requests in full would upset the arms balance between Israel and the Arab countries. Representatives of the Western powers held a consultation on this subject in the

framework of a joint committee for arms coordination in the Near East. As of the date of the meeting with Nutting, however, no decision had been taken. The Foreign Office adopted the utmost caution vis-à-vis the Israeli request and even tried to keep Israel in the dark as to the existence of the coordinating committee. For further information on this matter, see correspondence in PRO, FO371/104222, especially Nutting's report on his meeting with Elath, 9 July 1953, and Ross to Evans, 17 July 1953. See also Elath to Peres, 14 July 1953, and Gazit to Elath, 24 July 1953, 130.02/2587/9.

294. United States Division (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 12 July 1953

Coded Tel IWA545; Inc.: 130.09/2309/14

The following issues were raised during Sharett's talk with Russell (Bendor and Fried were also present):

(1) The Washington Conference:[1] Sharett wished to convey the following to the State Department: (a) Israel expects that no decision affecting Israel will be taken at the conference without prior consultation with it. (b) Free passage through the Suez Canal must be guaranteed in any settlement with or involving Egypt. (c) Israel stands firm in its opposition to the supply of arms to Arab countries, since such arms would be directed against Israel.

(2) Sharett said that he agrees with Dulles's testimony before the Senate Appropriations Committee[2] on the need for peace and a regional approach, but he would appreciate clarification of several points: (a) What did Dulles mean by a "single package program"? Does this indicate a change in allocations policy and that henceforth the Administration, rather than Congress, will be responsible for allocating aid funds? Russell replied that he assumes that the allocation policy for the Middle East will be similar to that currently in force for Europe and South America, namely, Congressional approval of global sums with no specification of the country-by-country breakdown. (b) What did Dulles mean when he spoke of providing military aid to help establish a regional defense organization? Did he mean that the bilateral agreements will evolve over time into a regional organization, or is his intention to condition military aid on willingness to join a regional organization? (c) Dulles's remarks that U.S. policy in the region is intended to improve relations with the Arab countries are a cause for concern, since the implication is that the U.S. formerly favored Israel. Sharett warned against appeasing the Arabs at Israel's expense; such a policy has already failed abysmally during the period of the British Mandate.

(3) Sharett pointed to the renewed deterioration in the security situation along the borders, including the murder of two soldiers near Jerusalem and

of an Israeli resident in a settlement near the Gaza Strip[3] within a 24-hour period. Israel will ask the State Department to exert pressure on Jordan in view of this development. Russell said that they are encouraged by the improvement in the situation over the last few weeks and hope that this has not just been a lull in acts of violence. The State Department does not believe that the cause of peace will be furthered by beating the Jordanians on the head. Rather, they must be encouraged to seek peace. Sharett replied that peace is as long-range objective, but there is an immediate problem of preventing murderous acts. He informed Russell of the establishment of the Border Police and of the efforts to raise the morale of border-region residents. He emphasized that the cooperation of the Arab authorities is required to prevent infiltration and murder.

(4) Sharett asked why the export licenses for trucks are being held up.[4] Russell said that he is in the dark, but added that the report he prepared on the subject included McDaniel's reservations as to the absolute necessity of the purchase. Sharett retorted that Israel may spend its money as it sees fit. Russell proposed that McDaniel and an expert representing the Maḥẓevei YIsrael company meet and discuss the matter. He noted that in the past, machinery was purchased and then not used in the most efficient or economical manner; it would be a shame to again spend large sums on equipment that is not essential.

(5) At the end of the talk, Russell said that he hoped there is no substance to the report of the imminent transfer of the Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem. Sharett replied that the American Embassy has already received notification to this effect.[5]

Notes

1. The foreign ministers of the three Western powers conferred in Washington on 10–14 July. The main topic on their agenda was the issue of Germany and relations with the Soviet Union. They also discussed Indochina and the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations over the Suez Canal.
2. Dulles testified on 9 July.
3. The first incident took place on 9 July and the second on the next day.
4. See Nos. 264, 281, and 285.
5. The reference is to the delay by the Office of International Trade in the State Department in issuing export licenses for 35 trucks purchased by the Mif'alei Tovalah company, a subsidiary of Maḥẓevei YIsrael.
6. See No. 292.
7. For Dulles's remarks, see No. 295 and n. 1 there. For a detailed report on the Russell-Sharett meeting, see Bendor to Goitein, 14 July 1953, 93.08/357/43.

295. United States Division (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 12 July 1953

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2309/1

Eban is requested to drop hints at the State Department that if it issues a protest over the transfer of the Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem, Israel will have no alternative but to make public Dulles's comments during his visit to Jerusalem:[1] (1) that the Ministry should not be transferred while he was in the region; (2) that when it is transferred, Israel should declare its concern for the Holy Places. Israel has fulfilled both conditions.

Notes

1. See No. 209.
2. For Sharett's declaration in the Knesset on the Holy Places, see No. 280, n. 2.

296. W. Eytan (Tel Aviv) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 13 July 1953

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2309/14

In reply to the previous telegram,[1] Eytan reports that an emergency session of the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Committee, chaired by Gen. Bennike, was held on 11 July. The Israeli representative stressed the seriousness of the latest Jordanian attack, which had a distinctly military character, and made it plain that Israel is not interested in formal resolutions but in preventive measures and punishment of the offenders. Hence, rather than moving condemnation of Jordan, it is demanding that Jordan locate the attackers and punish them severely. The Jordanians replied that already on the night of the attack they had begun combing the villages in search of the attackers. Bennike emphasized that, after a period of relative quiet, serious incidents are flaring up once again. He called upon Jordan to find the offenders and prevent murderous attacks.

Notes

1. An identical telegram was sent to the missions listed in n. 2 below.
2. In a telegram of 10 July, sent to Washington (542), London (D906), Paris (L754), and Rome (R835), Eytan reported on incidents that took place from 7 to 10 July along

the Israel-Jordan border. In paragraph 3 he reported the death of two soldiers and the wounding of two others in an incident in the Judean Hills (130.09/2309/14).

297. Editorial Note

Renewal of Relations between Israel and the Soviet Union

The note printed below marks the completion of the diplomatic negotiations concerning the resumption of relations between Israel and the Soviet Union, which began in April 1953 (see Nos. 168 and 183). The Soviet ambassador in Sofia handed the note to Avner and Razin on 17 July 1953. On 20 July, a communiqué on the resumption of relations was issued simultaneously in Moscow and Jerusalem. The communiqué, which included the exchange of notes between the two foreign ministries, was published in the Israeli press on 21 July. (See Avner and Razin to the Foreign Ministry, telegram SO100, 16 July 1953, and compare their telegram of 17 July 1953, both in File 130.11/2507/5. See also the Foreign Ministry press release, 20 July 1953, ibid.)

298. Note from V. Molotov to M. Sharett . 15 July 1953

Notes

1. The original note is in File 130.11/2507/5.
2. See No. 288.
3. On the initiative for the resumption of relations, see No. 287, paragraphs (1) and (2).
4. The part of the sentence from here to the words "with Israel" did not appear in the Soviets' original draft. See No. 282 and No. 289, n. 2.

299. Meeting: M. Sharett–G. W. Boissevain (Jerusalem, 16 July 1953)

Report: 130.02/2458/7

Boissevain came at Sharett's invitation. It was the first visit by a foreign diplomat to the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem. Sharett informed him in confidence of the pending resumption of relations with the Soviet Union.[1] Boissevain expressed his satisfaction at this development and asked whether the initiative had come from the Soviets. Sharett gave him a chronicle of the negotiations from the start—the Polish overture, the negotiations in Sofia, and the Russians' insistence that outwardly the resumption of rela-

tions appear to be an Israeli initiative, their rationale being that, because the bomb had been thrown in Tel Aviv, Israel must be seen to be taking the first step. Sharett related the Soviet demand that in its note the Israel state categorically that it will not participate in any alliance or aggressive act against the Soviet Union; initially they had insisted that Israel promise to refrain from joining any combination of forces hostile to the Soviet Union or directed against it, but Israel had refused to make such a pledge. Boissevain asked whether the emigration of Soviet Jews to Israel was raised in the note or during the negotiations. Sharett replied in the negative, but said that the emigration issue had been raised in a document that Israel transmitted to the Soviets in late 1951. The reference to this document in the present note indicates that Israel's request remains in force.

Note

1. See No. 297 (Editorial Note). See also Nos. 288 and 298.

300. E. Sasson (Rome) to W. Eytan. 16 July 1953

Coded Tel.: MPR585; Inc.: 130.09/2356/4

Sasson reports on a talk at the Italian Foreign Ministry, in which Giustiniani informed him that the Italian government had decided not to move its legation to Jerusalem. He hopes that Israel will understand Italy's unique situation and not view this as an unfriendly act. He also hopes that the liaison office in Tel Aviv will continue to function and not turn into a mere mail drop. Giustiniani believes that any show of flexibility on Israel's part would soften reactions to the transfer and help Israel in the future. He asked Sasson to remind Sharett of his promise that the new Italian minister could present his credentials in Tel Aviv. At the end of the talk he asked whether the Russians intend to establish their legation in Jerusalem after the resumption of relations. Sasson replied that he had not yet received information on the resumption of relations.

Note

1. See No. 297 (Editorial Note).

301. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 20 July 1953

Coded Tel. 54; Outg.: 130.09/2377/1

Eytan reports that Sharett invited the representatives of the United States, Britain, France, and Turkey to Jerusalem in order to inform them of the resumption of relations with the Soviet Union. Russell replied that he had instructions not to come to Jerusalem. Evans said that he must pass on any invitation to the Foreign Office, specifying the topic of discussion. Gilbert's instructions are to coordinate his position with that of his American and British colleagues. Istinyeli, having received no instructions from Ankara, could not comply. As a result, these representatives will learn about the resumption of relations over the radio and receive no background information.

Note

1. See No. 297 (Editorial Note).

302. A. Biran [Jerusalem] to W. Eytan. 20 July 1953

130.02/2408/6

Biran reports on several meetings with various foreign diplomats in Jerusalem during recent days, in particular 'Azmi Nashashibi. The topics discussed were as follows:

(1) *The transfer of the Foreign Ministry:* There were no reactions by foreign representatives after the transfer. Obviously the foreign missions will not rush to move to Jerusalem, and the previous situation will continue to obtain. Najat Nashashibi, head of the Jordanian Foreign Ministry's liaison bureau in the Old City, reacted harshly. He claimed that Jordanian public opinion supports internationalization, irrespective of what its government says in public. By contrast, 'Azmi Nashashibi took a more flexible approach in a meeting on 17 July. He recognized that the transfer of the Foreign Ministry was a technical step and admitted that Jordan opposes functional internationalization.

(2) *Infiltration:* In the same talk with 'Azmi Nashashibi, the first part of which was also attended by De Ridder, Nashashibi said that there is no organized gang engaging in murderous raids in the area; the Jordanian authorities and the Arab Legion are sincere in their opposition to infiltration. In radio broadcasts he is going to deliver in the near future he intends

to make the point that the Arabs are causing damage to themselves by the infiltrations. Nevertheless, he admitted to Biran that it is difficult to prevent infiltration, given the length of the border; neither Israel nor Jordan can set up a live fence of soldiers along the border to prevent infiltration. Biran asked why the refugees have not been moved away from the border. Nashashibi replied that the refugees have already turned the camps into permanent settlements and moving them would be difficult. He said that he had presented proof to UN and foreign representatives that the courts and regional governors are punishing infiltrators. Biran comments that Nashashibi is a persuasive orator; it is not surprising that UN personnel find Jordan's stand more convincing than Israel's. Nashashibi gives the impression that Jordan sincerely wishes to prevent infiltration and is hindered only by the length of its borders and the condition of the refugees. Even Bennike, who had spoken with Biran that same day, emphasized the desperate situation of the Triangle villagers. He was moved by the poverty and helplessness of the villages near the border, which have no agricultural hinterland. Biran feels that Bennike should be presented with a more balanced picture and be shown the conditions in which Jewish refugees are living in Jerusalem.

(3) *Development plans in Jordan:* Nashashibi spoke enthusiastically about development plans in Jordan, including the Yarmuk Project and Musa al-Alami's pilot project for the Jordan Valley—an example of the possibilities for agricultural development in difficult conditions. He says that even tourists and UNRWA personnel are impressed by the project; he seemed proud that the Jordanians, too, are capable of such achievements. According to him, Jordan's economic situation is good and Amman is flourishing.

(4) *Prospects for a solution:* Nashashibi sees no new way to resolve the problem. In his opinion, things will continue as they are for a long time, until the temporary becomes permanent, unless something exceptional happens to alter the course of history. He admits that great advantage would accrue to the Arabs were the gates of the Old City opened and free passage permitted to tourists and others. Although such openness would advance the cause of peace, the Arabs are not ready for a step of this kind.

(5) *American influence:* Nashashibi heaped lavish praise on the Americans, who, through their aid programs, have become a major player in the Middle East. They also know how to endear themselves to the peoples of the region. Biran was astounded at Nashashibi's praise. He infers that the United States has already supplanted England in Jordan; but it is equally possible that this praise was prompted by other factors or by a particular mood of Nashashibi's.

Note

1. *Sic*. Here and below the text should read: Bennike.

303. Sh. Divon (Paris) to the Western Europe Division. 21 July 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2345/2

Divon summarizes a number of reactions to the resumption of relations with the Soviet Union: (1) Western and Asian diplomats whom he has met socially congratulated him and pointed out that the resumption of relations constitutes a major victory for Israeli diplomacy. They think the move should be seen as part of an overall Soviet strategy to reduce tensions in the world. (2) Marchal views the renewal of relations as evidence of the strengthening of Israel's international standing and as proof that the Russians are not unduly concerned by Arab reactions. He asked whether the step may not lead to a deterioration of relations with the United States, given that the latter is trying to appease the Arabs. Marchal asked for details of the commitment demanded by the Soviets that Israel refrain from joining an alliance with aggressive intent. (3) Schumann views the resumption of relations as an important Israeli victory, one that will give Israel room for maneuver. He sees the Soviet step as an attempt to disrupt the solidarity and unity of the Western world, following similar overtures to Turkey, Yugoslavia, and Greece. He is confident that, just as the Soviets were unsuccessful in their previous attempts, they will fail now too, and Israel will remain true to its own interests and goals.

Note

1. See No. 297 (Editorial Note).

304. D. Goitein to the United States Division (telegram). 21 July 1953

Notes

1. See No. 279 and n. 2 there. On the circumstances that led to the State Department decision, see *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1249–51 and 1252–53. See also No. 312 and n. 5 there.
2. The $6 million that Israel received in June from the balance of the 1953 grant-in-aid, to cover its immediate debts. (See No. 279 and n. 2 there.)
3. Compare the report on the meeting in *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, p. 1259.

305. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to F. E. Shinnar (Cologne). 21 July 1953

Orig.: 93.43/295/11

Sharett comments on Shinnar's letter to Eytan:[1]

(1) He agrees that they must undertake a systematic and carefully planned campaign to educate Israeli public opinion before the establishment of relations with Germany. He also accepts Shinnar's method of publishing information about the implementation of the reparations agreement and all its ramifications. In the wake of Shinnar's criticism, Sharett promises to brief the Israeli press and Israel's missions abroad on this matter. (2) On the other hand, writes Sharett, the picture is not as gloomy as Shinnar painted it. The Israeli press, including *Ma'ariv*, has published positive and businesslike reports on the ways of implementing the agreement. Sharett expresses confidence that when the first shipments arrive it will be possible to rally public opinion around the practical aspect of reparations and to leave behind the bitter dispute that raged at the start of the affair, or at least to reduce its impact, while increasingly fostering a positive attitude towards reparations and, incidentally, Israel's relations with Germany. (3) Despite the favorable odds, Sharett warns Shinnar against illusions as to the speed of this process. Hatred of Germany, as a primitive emotion over which there is no conscious control, is still deeply rooted in the Israeli populace; it converts any idea of official rapprochement into something repulsive that cannot be digested emotionally. Even among those who think along political lines, there are far-reaching reservations concerning any contractual ties with Germany. Hence Sharett believes that Shinnar's assessment that diplomatic relations could be established as early as 1954 is totally unfounded. It would be better not to entertain false hopes and lead others astray. (4) Sharett warns against setting dates for the establishment of relations or designating candidates for posts in a permanent mission. The idea of Franz Böhm as a candidate for German ambassador to Israel is interesting; he would like to check its source. (5) Sharett calls to Shinnar's attention the possibility of domestic terror in Israel and its dangers. He notes the difficulty of inviting Böhm and his family to Israel, since it would be necessary to provide a police escort for the family throughout their stay in the country, to protect them against an organized band of thugs or some crazy individual. (6) In conclusion, Sharett writes that progress must be made, but slowly and deliberately, without forcing the issue. The support of the public at large, or at least of large sections of it, must be guaranteed at every step. Care must be taken not to lose the battle through impulsive action. Above all, people's sensibilities must be respected: nothing must be done that the public might view as a moral desecration.

Notes

1. Shinnar wrote that the time had come to take the initiative and work methodically towards the establishment of diplomatic relations with Germany. He proposed a definite timetable, with the following stages: (1) Before the planned elections in Germany, a series of publications should be issued to prepare Israeli public opinion, such as: information about the arrangements for paying for oil supplies, ongoing information on goods being shipped to Israel, explanation of Germany's role in the international balance of power, etc. In this context, he expressed his disappointment that the Foreign Ministry had not publicized the official visits by Israeli representatives to Adenauer and other German leaders. (2) Immediately after the elections, Israel should commence preliminary talks with the Germans with the intention of establishing relations by spring-summer 1954. Shinnar added that the German Foreign Ministry was expecting such a development and there was even some talk of Franz Böhm as a potential minister or ambassador to Israel. (3) Official talks with the Germans should begin in early 1954. Shinnar recommended considering the appointment of Nahum Goldmann as Israel's first ambassador to Germany (130.02/2384/14).
2. In this context, Sharett defined as mistaken the tendency to tone down newspaper reports about the presence of German VIPs, including the president of the Senate of Bremen, at a ceremony held on 23 July aboard an Israeli cargo ship to mark the first shipment of goods under the reparations agreement. (See Sharett's memorandum to Eytan, 28 July 1953, 130.02/2417/8.)
3. The reference is to the uncovering of a country-wide terrorist underground, which the Government, on 6 June, declared to be a terrorist organization as defined by the Prevention of Terror Ordinance 1948. The 16 persons arrested were tried by a military court, which on 25 August found 13 of them guilty of membership in a terrorist organization.

306. E. Elath (London) to M. Sharett. 22 July 1953

Coded Tel. L10814; Inc.: 130.09/2319/5

Elath reports on a talk with Strang. Strang mentioned that when he read about the resumption of relations with the Soviet Union he had been worried that there might be something behind Israel's commitment that would influence Israel's foreign policy and significantly modify it in the future. Elath made it plain that there has been no change in Israel's policy as a result of the renewal of ties with the Soviet Union. He gave the following reasons for Israel's wish to resume relations with the Soviet Union: (1) strengthening Israel's international standing; (2) strengthening the Government's domestic standing and deprive its leftist opposition of a dangerous propaganda argument; (3) bolstering the morale of the Jews of the Soviet Union and its satellites, raising their standing as an ethnic group in those countries, and bolstering their hopes of emigrating to Israel. Strang

thanked Elath for his extremely enlightening explanation, which, he promised, he would relay to Salisbury and Lloyd.

Notes

1. The reference is evidently to Sharett's telegram to the Israel Missions abroad (20 July 1953, 130.09/2377/1), in which he notified them of the resumption of relations with the Soviet Union. In paragraph 4 of that telegram Sharett wrote that the Russians had initially attempted to extract a commitment from Israel not to join an alliance directed against the Soviet Union. They subsequently backed down somewhat, changing the phrase to "an alliance hostile to the Soviet Union," whereas Israel proposed "any alliance or pact aiming at aggression against the Soviet Union." Israel did not give in; this led to the text that appears in Sharett's letter to Molotov (see No. 288, paragraph 3).
2. Compare Strang's report on the talks, 22 July 1953, PRO, FO371/104746.

307. Editorial Note

Submission of a Note by the French Ambassador to the Foreign Ministry in Tel Aviv, 23 July 1953

The note printed below was submitted to the Foreign Ministry in Tel Aviv by the French ambassador on 23 July. The day before, the ambassador told Najar that he had proposed to the Quai d'Orsay that it not be transmitted, in order to maintain solidarity with Britain and the United States and to keep France from being the first to submit a note to Israel. At the same time, he had recommended that were it decided to submit the note, it be delivered in Jerusalem. He told Najar that the Americans interpreted the transfer of the Foreign Ministry as a slight to Dulles and as an Israeli reaction to the new American policy in the Middle East. He said that the Americans were the main instigators of the unfavorable reaction to the transfer. Russell had approached him several times to forestall his meeting with Najar. He added that the current situation in Jerusalem satisfied French interests. (See Najar to Eytan, 28 July 1953, 93.02/163/6.)

308. Note from P. Gilbert to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 23 July 1953

Notes

1. See No. 292

2. See No. 111 (Editorial Note).
3. See Vol. 7, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, pp. 159–60.
4. On the political significance of the letter, see J. Herzog to M. Sharett, 24 July 1953, 130.02/2444/5.

309. Editorial Note

Memorandum from the Government of Israel to the Member States of the United Nations concerning the Situation along the Border with Jordan, 23 July 1953

On 23 July, Eban presented to the UN secretary-general a memorandum for the member states of the organization, concerning the situation along Israel's border with Jordan. The memorandum summarized the incidents along that frontier since the beginning of 1952 and the number of Israeli casualties. It particularly emphasized the incidents that had taken place in June 1953 and enumerated those for which the Mixed Armistice Commission had censured the government of Jordan. The memorandum reported on the agreement to prevent infiltration and the meeting between the Israeli and Jordanian local commanders. Israel accused Jordan of failing to honor the local commanders' agreement of 8 June (No. 256) and noted that infiltration had increased immediately after the signing of that agreement. Even after the high-ranking encounter between officers of the two sides, on 29 June (No. 286), there had been no improvement. Several days later (9 July), Israeli soldiers had been killed in an incident with the Jordanians. The memorandum concluded that there would be an end to the tension only if the Jordanian government adopted harsh measures against the infiltrators and stood by its commitments under the armistice agreement. (See A. Eban to Dag Hammarskjöld, 23 July 1953, 93.03/3007/4.)

310. Editorial Note

Agreement between Israel and Egypt on the Release of Vessels that Experience Difficulties in their Territorial Waters, 23 July 1953

On 23 July, the Israeli and Egyptian representatives on the Mixed Armistice Commission signed an agreement for the return of civilian vessels that had experienced difficulties in the territorial waters of one of the parties, similar to previous agreements signed with Syria in January 1952 (see Vol. 7, p. 47) and with Lebanon in March 1952. The agreement was signed at Kilometer 95 on the Israel-Egypt border, winding up protracted negotia-

tions that had begun in early January 1953. The agreement was signed by Segan-Aluf Gaon for Israel and by Lt.-Col. Gohar for Egypt. The chairman of the Israel-Egypt Mixed Armistice Commission, Col. Hinckel, signed as a witness.

The agreement read as follows:

> The following is herewith agreed between both parties:
>
> In the event a non-military vessel of either Party, carrying non-military cargo, is forced by engine trouble, storm or any other reason beyond the control of the vessel and its crew, to seek refuge in the territorial waters of the other party, it shall be granted shelter therein and shall be allowed thereafter to proceed on its way freely and at the earliest possible time, together with its cargo, crew and passengers (130.16/2952/5).

See also No. 311, n. 3.

311. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 24 July 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2309/14

Eytan summarizes a meeting of senior Israeli and Jordanian police officers, attended by Vigier, De Ridder, and both sides' representatives on the Mixed Armistice Commission. The Jordanian representative proposed that his government adopt special measures to put an end to infiltration. He demanded a similar undertaking from Israel, claiming that infiltration takes place in both directions. The Israeli representative confirmed Jordan's responsibility for the infiltrations but denied any Israeli responsibility. He rejected outright the claim that Israeli infiltrators cross into Jordan. The meeting ended with no agreement.and with no date for another meeting.

Eytan reports the signing of a shipping agreement with Egypt on 23 July,[2] but asks that it not be publicized.[3]

Notes

1. The first meeting took place on 9 July. See No. 286, n. 3.
2. See No. 310 (Editorial Note).
3. The ban on publication was rescinded two days later. On 26 July the IDF spokesman informed the press of the signing of the agreement.

312. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 27 July 1953

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2304/14

Russell and McDaniel met with Sharett on 25 July. Russell informed him that the State Department had decided not to grant money for debt consolidation, because of U.S. budgetary difficulties and because of Congressional opposition to the use of Export-Import Bank and Mutual Security Act funds for such purposes. The State Department would like to find, in concert with Israel, other ways of remedying the situation; for example, trying to influence creditors to reschedule loans. The State Department requests that negotiations on technical and economic aid be conducted in Tel Aviv, not in Washington. Russell also said that in meeting with Mikesell and McDaniel, Eshkol derided "experts" of various persuasions and argued in favor of Israel's policy, which is based on faith in the country's future. He asked that the U.S. government help Israel, out of a similar conviction. Russell asked Sharett whether Eshkol meant to imply that Israel has changed its economic policy, as this is stated in paragraph 5a of Eban's August 1952 letter to the State Department.[4] He added that the United States is willing to help Israel, as in the past, but has never undertaken to save Israel from defaulting on loans. The Government of Israel is mistaken if it believes there is an American policy to rescue Israel.

Sharett replied that he would have to consult with the Finance Ministry concerning the implications of the American refusal to provide direct aid for debt consolidation. He is certain that Israel's economic policy has not changed. This obviously was not what Eshkol meant, but he will clarify the matter with him.[5] Sharett proposed that talks be resumed at the Ministry of Finance in Jerusalem. This sparked off an argument as to the venue for the next meeting. Russell said that he would have to request instructions. Sharett explained that the Americans would paralyze negotiations should they insist that they be held in Tel Aviv. It would only complicate matters should the impression be created that the Americans are exploiting Israel's difficulties to force it to act in a manner not consonant with its dignity. Russell said that the complications were created by the time and manner in which Israel chose to move its Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem. Sharett replied that the date had been fixed at Dulles's request and according to his advice.[6] Russell went on to say that the transfer of the Ministry had upset Dulles's plans to decrease tensions in the area. Sharett replied that, judging by Dulles's speech,[7] it is hard to believe that he sees any prospect of easing tensions in the near future. The speech contained no whisper of criticism of the move to Jerusalem.

Despite the tense atmosphere, Sharett and Russell parted on good terms, thanks to the excellent relations between them.

Notes

1. See No. 279 and n. 2 there.
2. See No. 304.
3. The meeting took place on 24 June. For a memorandum on the meeting, see File 130.02/2420/18; compare *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1249–51.
4. See Vol. 7, No. 289.
5. In a personal letter to Sharett (27 July), to which the above-mentioned memorandum was attached, Eshkol explained that he could not understand how one could infer from his remarks that Israel had changed its policy and was intending "once again to increase the burden of its short-term loans in order to carry out urgent projects, without taking the repercussions into account." He argued that there was no basis for the Americans' impression, "unless they themselves were seeking a pretext for such an impression" (130.02/2420/18).
6. See No. 295 and notes there.
7. See No. 243 (Editorial Note).
8. See Vol. 7, No. 315.
9. See No. 304 and n. 2 there.
10. For a detailed report on the meeting, see Sh. Bendor to A. Eban, 3 August 1953, 93.08/357/4; compare *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1262–3.

313. Editorial Note

Note from the Foreign Minister to the U.S. Secretary of State, 27 July 1953

The note was delivered to Dulles after his return from Korea on 10 August. Eban handed it to Byroade at their meeting on 19 August and asked him to transmit it to Dulles. (See No. 346.) The note was drafted by Sharett and several slight amendments were made prior to its delivery in the version printed below. The draft with the amendments is in File 130.20/2491/2. (See also Sharett's telegrams to Eban, 2 August and 16 August 1953, 130.09/2309/14; telegram from the Embassy in Washington to the United States Division, 12 August 1953, 130.09/2310/3; Herlitz to the United States Division, 20 August 1953, 130.20/2491/2.)

314. M. Sharett to J. F. Dulles. 27 July 1953

Notes

1. See Vol. 4, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, pp. 281–82.
2. See Vol. 7, No. 135.
3. See Vol. 7, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, pp. 159–60, and No. 231.
4. See No. 207.

5. See No. 280, n. 2.
6. See No. 301.
7. For Dulles's reply, see No. 363.

315. Editorial Note

Consultation on U.S. Military Aid, 29 July 1953

Present at the session were: Sharett, who had been acting prime minister since Ben-Gurion left for vacation on 19 July, acting Defence Minister Pinhas Lavon, Chief of Staff Mordechai Makleff, Aluf Moshe Dayan, Segan-Aluf Yehoshafat Harkabi, Reuven Shiloah, Shmuel Bendor, and Uri Lubrani. They discussed possible Israeli reactions to the Economic and Military Assistance to Near East Countries appropriations bill, which was about to receive final Congressional approval (see No. 320). Sharett reported on the Administration's intention to allocate to Israel only a small proportion of the $30 million dollars earmarked for military aid, with the remainder going to other countries in the region. He added that the Americans also intended to provide arms to several Arab countries, but apparently not to Israel. The American argument was that Israel had sufficient arms and that current Arab regimes had to be defended through the provision of weapons. According to the United States, Israel need not fear this process, since bolstering Arab regimes and tying them more closely to America would enable the Administration to influence them in favor of Israeli interests. Sharett pointed out that there had been a serious change of concepts in the U.S. Administration and that action must be taken against this. He reported on the instructions given to the Embassy in Washington (see No. 316, n. 1) and said that he proposed continued opposition to the supply of weapons to the Arabs. He reported on Gen. Hall's impending tour of the Middle East and proposed that the visit be utilized to convince the Pentagon that Israel, not the Arabs, required arms. Makleff warned that acquiring weapons from the United States would entail a visit by an American military mission and the transmission of information about IDF capabilities that the army wished to keep confidential. He insisted that the issue be weighed from this aspect as well.

Dayan went even further. He proposed not accepting arms from the Americans even if the Arabs did receive them. Since Israel would not receive the high-quality arms it needed, it was better not to harm the army by exposing it to a U.S. military mission. He also feared American *diktats* in the military sphere, and incidentally revealed that the state of relations between the two armies was not good and IDF officers were not being admitted to military courses in the United States. (For additional details on this consultation, see the report, 30 July 1953, 93.08/361/8.)

316. D. Goitein to M. Sharett (telegram). 29 July 1953

Notes

1. Sharett instructed the Embassy staff in Washington to react strongly to the U.S. Middle East arms policy after the anticipated publication of the economic and military assistance grants. He preferred an unofficial reaction by the press and radio, to include "condemnation of the superficiality and folly of the State Department's policy, which hazards millions on a risky venture by offering bribes, in the form of weapons, to adventurous and volatile regimes that would use them for all kinds of mischief, including against Israel, and not to safeguard democracy." He recommended examining the possibility of exerting private and public Jewish pressure and added (paragraph 5) that even if "the effectiveness of such a move is extremely doubtful, we must not be deterred, since the danger inherent in silence, which is tantamount to acquiescing in or even agreeing with the decision, is more serious than the danger that the Administration will ignore the criticism and protests." According to Sharett, criticism and protest would make it more difficult for the U.S. to carry out its plan and would help win concessions when the time came for Israel to raise other demands (29 July 1953, 130.09/2309/14).
2. In his weekly press conference on 28 July, Dulles expressed displeasure at Israel's transfer of the Foreign Ministry, against the recommendations of the U.S. government. He declared that this transfer, during a period of tension in the Middle East, was untimely and announced that the United States would not move its embassy to Jerusalem.

317. M. Fischer (Ankara) to E. Najar. 29 July 1953

Copy: 130.10/2615/14

Fischer reports on a talk with the Turkish foreign minister. Köprülü's welcome was more cordial than on previous occasions. They discussed American policy. Köprülü was of the opinion that the Americans have not yet decided on their Middle East policy, so one must wait and see. He believes that the U.S. government prefers to disregard McGhee's experience and wants to relearn everything from scratch. Fischer asked about arms supplies to the Arab countries. Köprülü replied that he is not well informed on the matter; in his opinion, any assessment of the situation must take into account the quantity and quality of the proposed arms. He agreed with Fischer that the very idea of arms supply to the Arabs is a bad one, in terms both of Israel-Arab relations and of Turkish aspirations. When Fischer mentioned the transfer of the Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem. Köprülü advised Israel not to alter the status quo in Jerusalem. Later in the talk, Fischer spoke of how he views his assignment as Israel's representative in Ankara. He will work to promote closer relations, strengthen the

friendship between Israel and Turkey, and develop economic ties. He hopes that close ties will develop between the Israeli and Turkish military, but without blatant publicity. Köprülü agreed with him, wished him success in his post, and expressed the hope that, when his term was over, they will have become personal friends, as was the case with Eliahu Sasson.

318. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to the Israel Delegation to the United Nations. 30 July 1953

Coded Tel.: 268; Outg.: 130.09/2330/14

With a view towards the autumn session of the General Assembly, Sharett asks Eban's opinion as to whether Israel should continue its policy in favor of recognizing the People's Republic of China and, should the question arise, to support its admission to the United Nations. He reminds Eban of the contents of Acheson's message after their talk in Paris in 1951,[1] namely, that the United States disapproves of ties with China as long as it remains an aggressor. Despite the fact that the U.S. Administration has changed in the interim, and that the new Administration is even more extreme on this issue, it may nevertheless be worth adhering to Israel's position.

Notes

1. See Vol. 6, No. 519.
2. In a telegram dated 6 August, in which Eban reported on the Israeli delegation's preparations for the forthcoming Eighth General Assembly, he wrote that he doubted whether the admission of the People's Republic of China would be raised at the Assembly. If the appropriate opportunity presented itself, however, the delegation would put forward Israel's declared policy on this issue (130.09/2331/3). See also No. 373 and n. 2 there.

319. R. Shiloah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Paris. 30 July 1953

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.02/2453/20

Shiloah asks that Divon be instructed, in strictest confidence, to ask his Egyptian friend[1] to pass on to his superiors the message sent in a separate telegram.[2] Divon is to tell him, orally, that, in Israel's opinion, the Egyptian government's renewed efforts to deal with economic problems, its re-

sumption of negotiations with Britain, and the discussions in the United States on economic and military aid to the countries of the region, have created a favorable climate for discussions between representatives of the two governments. Divon should also add that Israel is prepared to dispatch him to Egypt for talks, and that Israel reiterates its pledge to maintain absolute confidentiality concerning any contacts with Egypt. He should point out that to date leaks have occurred only when a third party was involved in the contacts.

Notes

1. Abd el-Rahman Sadiq, a member of the staff of the Egyptian embassy in Paris. On the most recent contacts with him, see Nos. 205 and 229.
2. The message stated that, in Israel's opinion, recent political developments in the Middle East rendered a semi-official and secret meeting between Israeli and Egyptian representatives in the near future, to exchange opinions on questions of interest to both countries, both opportune and worthwhile. It was proposed that Shiloah, on his way to take up his new post in Washington, meet in an agreed-upon European city with a competent Egyptian representative. (See telegram from Foreign Ministry to Divon, 30 July 1953, 130.02/2453/20.)

320. D. Goitein to M. Sharett (telegram). 31 July 1953

Notes

1. The Congressional conference committee.
2. See No. 323.

321. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to M. Fischer (Ankara). 2 August 1953

Copy: 130.10/2546/2

Sharett is responding to Fischer's memorandum[1] in which he considers whether Israel should link the question of peace with the Arab countries to the other unresolved issues in the Middle East. According to Sharett, the tendency to exploit any opportunity that could help promote peace is justified, but one should follow it with caution.

Everything depends on the starting point and direction of the process. Referring specifically to whether there should be a linkage between negotiations over the Suez Canal and the issue of peace, Sharett puts forward

the following argument: On the one hand, Egypt wishes to reach a settlement on Suez and is willing to pay a certain price to obtain it. On the other hand, the Great Powers, especially the United States, are interested in solving the Israel-Arab conflict; theoretically, at least, they may be willing to press Egypt to make peace with Israel in return for satisfying its principal demands in Suez, and Egypt might comply. In that case, Sharett adds, he would not be apprehensive that Israel might be pressed by the Great Powers to make concessions to Egypt. The problem, however, is that this argument is valid only in theory. In practice, the Great Powers are unwilling to create a linkage between the two issues. On the contrary, they object to any additional encumbrance in their relations with Egypt and are unwilling to press that country. Nevertheless, Sharett does not rule out the possibility of trying such a course of action.

The idea of combining the peace issue with that of regional defense arose when it seemed that the latter was vital for the Western powers, especially the United States. After some consideration, however, it became clear that such a policy posed a threat to Israel, because the Powers are indeed liable to pressure Israel and the Arabs—but while the Arabs would be asked merely to evince a willingness to make peace, Israel would be asked to make concessions on the terms thereof.

Hence Sharett believes that Israel must avoid going overboard in its efforts to demonstrate that peace is a prerequisite for regional defense, as long as Israel holds that regional defense is a vital issue for the Powers. Now that the West has backed off from the plan, Israel's diplomatic strategy is no longer an urgent matter.

Note

1. Fischer disagreed with Eban's statement to Johnston (see No. 232) to the effect "that the solution to the Canal problem must be part of a peace settlement." He argued that Eban's conclusion was dangerous, because it would generate American pressure on Israel to make concessions for the sake of peace (130.10/2546/2).

322. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 3 August 1953

Coded Tel.: IWA603; Outg.: 130.09/2309/14

The telegram includes a report on the State Department's instructions concerning the transfer of the Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem. Jerusalem has learned that the State Department has decided that contact with the Foreign Ministry will be exclusively through the liaison bureau in Tel Aviv;

this directive may be breached only on explicit instructions from the Department. The U.S. ambassador and his staff have been instructed to reject any invitation to official ceremonies and receptions in Jerusalem. They may accept personal invitations, but must make sure that the opportunity is not exploited for "shop talk." The State Department is pleased with the united front that the Western powers have displayed against the transfer to Jerusalem. It directs that this unity be maintained at all costs, because Israel will certainly try to shatter it. The State Department's intention is to force Israel to expand the staff of its Tel Aviv bureau to serve as the avenue through which Israel's diplomatic relations are conducted. The U.S. government will not be party to any Israeli maneuvers to frustrate the American scheme by means of contacts with the consuls in Jerusalem or by dealing with all matters through the overseas missions.

The State Department policy was manifested in a directive that all economic negotiations be conducted in Tel Aviv. Russell even turned down an invitation from Golda Meyerson to a reception at her home. However, economic talks were held with Eshkol in Jerusalem.

In the view of the staff of the United States Division, the Americans are making a laughingstock of themselves and irking the diplomats of other countries, who have been ordered to defer against their will to the American *diktat*.

The Ministry in Jerusalem has decided to lobby vigorously at the State Department. The Embassy staff has been asked to meet with Bedell Smith with the aim of having the instructions prohibiting visits to Jerusalem rescinded. Israel has not responded in the Americans' childish manner and accepts invitations from the American Embassy to official receptions in Tel Aviv. The Foreign Ministry has informed the Americans that it will not behave rigidly and will agree from time to time to send officers down to Tel Aviv; but it will not expand the Liaison Bureau and its staff will travel to Tel Aviv for diplomatic talks only on a basis of reciprocity.

Notes

1. See No. 292; compare No. 301.
2. The reference is to the joint Israel-U.S. fund set up under paragraph 5 of the Agreement for a Technical Cooperation Program between the Government of Israel and the Government of the United States of America, signed in May 1952. See Vol. 6, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, p. 67; *Kitvei amanah*, Vol. 3, pp. 375–81.

323. D. Goitein (Washington) to M. Sharett. 4 August 1953

Orig.: 130.02/2414/27

Goitein analyzes Israel–United States relations in the wake of telegrams

from Israel[1] and an article in the *New York Times*, which suggested that Israel is gravely concerned about the state of relations between the two countries. The telegrams even created the impression that the Israel Embassy is aware of the rift but is doing nothing to counter it.

According to the *New York Times* article, the anxiety has three sources: the American refusal to provide a loan through the Export-Import Bank to pay off Israel's short-term debts;[2] the response of the U.S. government to the transfer of the Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem;[3] and the threat of arms supplies to Arab countries.

A sober assessment of these developments proves that they mark neither a change in policy nor disharmonious relations. The refusal to grant the loan should not be regarded as an indication of friction; it should not be assumed that under the Truman Administration Israel would have received the loan. As for Jerusalem, Dulles's remarks at the press conference[4] indicate no change in policy. It is hard to imagine that Washington would greet the relocation of the Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem with absolute silence or satisfaction. The American response thus far is no different than should have been expected.

As for the weapons, the Democratic Administration, too, had intended to supply arms to Egypt despite Israel's remonstrations. The assertion that there has been a change in policy, reflected in the current U.S. willingness to provide arms to Iraq and Syria, is an overstatement of a matter that was the subject of protracted discussions in the past and on which the affirmative decision was taken by the Truman Administration.

It should be borne in mind that before Naguib became the darling of the State Department, Shishakli was the hero of the day. There were moments in 1952 when the State Department would have been pleased to arm Shishakli had he agreed to accept on the Department's terms.

Nevertheless, there is reason, not for concern, but for a cautious and intelligent reassessment of the situation. There has been a change, not in policy but in the atmosphere, which is indeed less friendly. The chilly climate is reflected not in the refusal of a loan, nor in a change of policy on Jerusalem, nor even in the supply of arms to the Arabs, but rather in the fact that this policy has been made public and aired in the press. A decision seems to have been made to emphasize the pro-Arab nature of the Eisenhower Administration's policy.

There is no doubt that the new Administration wants to correct the distorted preference for Israel which, many believe, the Truman Administration exhibited. It may be assumed that whenever the new Administration takes action of any kind in the Middle East it will try to publicize the view, to both the Americans and the Arabs, that the Eisenhower Administration intends to improve the situation rather than make it worse. However, it does not follow that anything it does to benefit the Arabs is automatically to Israel's disadvantage. Nor has the new Administration treated all issues

with kid gloves. For example, it came out against Musaddeq and turned Naguib down, at least on the question of arms.

At the beginning of the year the State Department had prepared Israel for this development when it stated that it did not believe it would be able to exert its influence for the good of the Middle East, including Israel, without a positive change in Arab attitudes towards the United States.

Goitein stresses that despite the change of climate, the administration supported Israel in Congressional hearings. The pro-Israel remarks made there far outweigh the unpleasant comments. For example, even though the foreign-aid budget was cut back, the sum earmarked for Israel was scarcely reduced.

Summing up, Goitein suggests that Eban meet with those Jewish leaders who have an entrée in the Republican camp, describe the climate of opinion created by the Administration's recent actions, and ask them to intervene to bring about a change. He does not believe there is reason at present to orchestrate mass protests.

Finally, Goitein notes Israel's success, working through Congress, in obtaining military assistance.

Notes

1. See, for example, Sharett's telegram to Goitein, 30 July 1953. Sharett reported mounting concern in Israel about the apathy of the American Jewish community and its paralysis in the face of the winds blowing from Washington. He insisted that the American Jewish public must be urgently mobilized about this issue and requested an urgent survey before the next meeting of the Government (130.09/2309/13). See also No. 316, n. 1, and Goitein's telegram to Sharett, 31 July 1953, 130.09/2310/3.
2. See Nos. 304 and 312.
3. See Nos. 301 and 322.
4. See No. 243 (Editorial Note), No. 253 (paragraph 3), and No. 257.
5. See No. 209.
6. See No. 316, n. 2.
7. Byroade made these statements in his testimony before the House Appropriations Committee, published on 19 July. He made this comparison to support the Administration's intention to allocate large sums for arming Arab countries.
8. See No. 320. For another analysis of the Israel Embassy's achievements with regard to military and economic aid, see Goitein to Sharett, telegram W468, 6 August 1953, 93.01/2209/6.

324. Y. Ilsar (Tel Aviv) to E. Najar. 4 August 1953

Orig.: 130.10/2539/3

Pursuant to Yahil's letter of 22 July,[1] Ilsar raises the issue of Israel's rela-

tions with Germany. In his opinion, the reparations are an important stage in the normalization of relations. In anticipation of approval of the individual compensation law, Ilsar anticipates a flood of visitors to Germany. To prevent this, he suggests the establishment of a quasi-governmental institution or a private institution under government control, to handle all individual claims. Ilsar fears that the ban on travel to Germany will not hold up against the stream of restitution seekers. Hence organized action should be taken to prevent this development.

Ilsar notes that the Israeli press has recently adopted an objective and positive tone towards Germany. The change has come about spontaneously because of the new situation. In this context, he agrees with Shinnar, who suggested launching an extensive domestic information campaign about Israel-German relations before the reparations agreement comes into effect, to help work a gradual change in public opinion in Israel.

He also recommends allowing the import of a limited number of German magazines and permitting Israelis to subscribe to German dailies, although certainly not to permit, for now, their unrestricted sale at newsstands.

Finally, Ilsar notes the danger to Israel of the rapid development in relations between Germany and Arab countries, especially economic ties.

He sums up that a working plan for molding public opinion about German-Israeli relations should be drafted.[2]

Notes

1. The letter has not been located. In a telegram of the same date, however, Yahil explained his statements at a press conference in Bremen on 14 July, published in abridged form in *Davar* on 19 July. At the press conference, Yahil reported that the first shipment of reparations goods was to depart the port of Bremen in a few days. Replying to a question by one of the reporters about the mood in Israel regarding Germany, he said that Israelis preferred to keep Germany at arm's length, but public feeling had improved in view of the German government's sincere attitude in the matter of the reparations. If the reparations agreement were faithfully carried out, relations between the two countries would improve; but this would be a slow and organic process (130.10/2538/22).
2. The personal reparations law was passed by the West German Parliament on 31 July 1953, as had been agreed in Protocol No. 1, signed by representatives of the West German government and representatives of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims (see *Kitvei amanah,* Vol. 3, pp. 104–13). The law stipulated that within ten years Germany would pay victims of Nazi persecution on German soil a sum estimated at one billion dollars.
3. See No. 305, n. 1.
4. The reparations company set up by the Government in October 1952, headed by Giora Josephthal, with its main offices in Tel Aviv. It had set up a purchasing mission in Cologne in April 1953, directed by F. Shinnar.

5. Najar handed the note on to Eytan and suggested that a consultation be held on Ilsar's proposal. Eytan agreed to hold the consultation, adding that he was opposed to paragraphs 1 and 4 in the letter and favored visits only by Mass and Böhm, agreed with paragraphs 2 and 3, and had doubts about paragraph 5. (See the exchange of memoranda between Najar and Eytan, 4 and 6 August 1953, 130.10/2539/3.)

325. A. Eban to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram). 5 August 1953

Note

1. See Nos. 279 and 304.

326. M. Sharett to Sh. Avigur. 5 August 1953

Notes

1. Avigur wrote that, in his opinion, "the time has come for raising the question of renewed emigration with the People's Democracies," because "they are more responsive than ever" in the wake of the renewal of relations with the Soviet Union. He specified Rumania and Hungary in particular and recommended that Sharett spur the mission staffs into action (130.02/2398/59).
2. See No. 179 and n. 1 there.
3. See No. 333.

327. Meeting: M. Sharett–V. Bennike. 6 August 1953

Notes

1. Bennike took up his post on 27 June.
2. See No. 310 (Editorial Note).

328. Sh. Divon (Paris) to E. Najar. 6 August 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2345/2

Divon reports on a talk with Marchal, who informed him, on behalf of Parodi, that the arms and aircraft deal between Israel and France has been successfully concluded and that he regards this as an important step in closer cooperation between the two countries. He hopes that Israel appre-

ciates the many difficulties that were associated with the decisions. Divon adds that the Quai d'Orsay has given the Nord aircraft firm permission to manufacture and assemble military jet aircraft in Israel, provided that the matter is not made public and that appropriate cover actions are taken.

Note

1. On 31 July Marshall had informed Divon unofficially that the sale to Israel of all the artillery it had requested had been approved; he also told Divon about the approval granted to the Nord aircraft company (see telegram 347, 31 July 1953, 130.09/2345/2).

329. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 6 August 1952

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2309/14

Eytan reports on the Dayan-Bennike meeting of 31 July.[1]

(1) Dayan said that the talks with Syria are not making progress and declared that Israel will no longer postpone civilian development work in the demilitarized zones on Jewish-owned land and on land held and cultivated by Israel. Bennike did not object; he merely noted that the Syrians will protest.

(2) Dayan brought up the need to expel the Bedouin who have infiltrated into the Nizzana demilitarized zone, contrary to the terms of the armistice agreement with Egypt. He also stated Israel's intention to start cultivating and irrigating the zone. Bennike made no response, positive or negative. Dayan's impression was that he would more readily accept activity in Nizzana than in the demilitarized zone on the Syrian frontier.

Notes

1. Sent also to London, Paris, and Rome.
2. For a detailed report on the meeting, see the letter from A. Shalev to Ilan, 3 August 1953, 130.02/2428/4.

330. A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram). 6 August 1953

Notes

1. See Nos. 316 and 320, and Goitein to Sharett, telegram 462, 31 July 1953,

130.09/2310/3. For more on Goitein's attitude, see No. 323.

2. Sharett's telegram to Goitein, 5 August 1953, 130.09/2309/14. Sharett responded positively to these telegrams from Goitein and asked him to expedite the report on activity relating to military and economic aid.
3. Telegram from Eban to the United States Division, 23 June 1953, 130.09/2310/2. Eban explained the considerations that had guided the Embassy in its efforts to obtain military assistance. The basic assumption was that since the Administration had firmly resolved to provide arms to several Arab countries, efforts must focus on reducing the overall amount earmarked for military assistance to the Middle East, so as to cut the amount that would be allocated to the Arabs.
4. Frances Bolton had been nominated to serve as a U.S. delegate to the Eighth General Assembly.
5. Sharett agreed with some of Eban's and Goitein's arguments and conveyed the Government's appreciation of the achievements of the Embassy and the American Zionist Committee in their campaign for military and economic assistance. He added, however, that the Government agreed with him that preventive action was preferable to remedial action. For Sharett's reply, see telegram IW636, 10 August 1953, 130.09/2309/14.

331. E. Sasson (Rome) to W. Eytan. 6 August 1953

Coded Tel. MPR637; Inc.: 130.09/2356/4

Sasson reports on a talk with the papal nuncio in Rome. The nuncio told him that the Vatican is aware of Arab intentions to raise the internationalization of Jerusalem at the upcoming General Assembly and of their efforts to recruit supporters and sympathizers. In this vein, Arab diplomats in all the Latin countries of Europe and South America have been instructed to lay the groundwork in their host countries for a press offensive against Israel during the Assembly session on the issues of Jerusalem and the refugees. The nuncio made it clear that the Arabs are acting independently in this matter, not in concert with the Vatican and without its assistance or moral support. He adds that the Vatican favors the internationalization of Jerusalem, but only on religious grounds, and has no interest in the Arab efforts.

The nuncio has forwarded to the Vatican secretary of state the Israeli material on the relocation of the Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem and has received no instructions to act in the matter. His impression is that the Vatican prefers to wait for the results of the debate at the next General Assembly, because it is for the Assembly, which resolved the internationalization of Jerusalem, to take a stand on the new situation created by the transfer of the Ministry.

As for Sasson's comment that Sharett's remarks in the Knesset[1] generated an important opportunity for talks between Israel and the Vatican on

the status of the Holy Places, the nuncio said he is prepared to inform the Vatican secretary of state about this matter and to pass on his response to Sasson.[2]

Notes

1. The papal nuncio at the time was Archbishop Francesco Borgongini Duca.
2. The nuncio's remarks were a reply to complaints that Sasson had voiced against the Catholic press in Italy, including *l'Osservatore Romano*, for attempting, in the wake of the transfer of the Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem, to portray Israel as having anti-Catholic designs, violating Security Council resolutions, and seeking political gains. Sasson had expressed his regret that those responsible for the Catholic press in Italy were not attempting to curb this false propaganda. (For more on this issue and more details on the talk, see Sasson's letter to Eytan, 9 August 1953, 130.10/2523/18.)
3. See No. 280, n. 2.
4. Jacob Herzog, who received Sasson's telegram, expressed keen opposition to Sasson's remark in paragraph (4) about an opportunity for negotiations with the Vatican about the Holy Places. Herzog argued that there was no point in approaching the Vatican, given the reports from Rome that the Vatican was adamantly adhering to its traditional policy. On the contrary, an approach of this sort would merely generate the impression that Jerusalem was nervous. Talk about negotiations between Israel and the Vatican might encourage the Americans to propose a compromise between their positions. Finally, Herzog expressed concern that talks with the Vatican at this point could lead to tactical complications in Israel's relations with various Protestant organizations, with the Greek Orthodox Church, with Jordan, and even with the Soviets and the British. See Herzog to Sharett, 9 August 1953, 130.02/2443/10.

332. E. Sasson (Rome) to E. Najar. 7 August 1953

Orig.: 130.10/2534/13

Sasson comments on Avni's conversation with the director of the research department at the Italian Foreign Ministry, Prof. Toscano. Sasson does not accept Toscano's assessment that for five years the Italian undersecretary for foreign affairs, Paolo Taviani, had been the only obstacle to normal relations between Israel and Italy, because of his radical and fierce opposition to any rapprochement between the two countries. Sasson believes that Italy's Middle East policy is determined, on the basis of political, geographic, and economic considerations, by the entire Italian cabinet, and not by two or three ministers. Evidently the members of the Italian government believe that a correct Middle East policy will turn the backward and primitive Arab countries into a safe haven for Italian culture, commercial goods, excess population, and so on.

The expectations held by the secretary-general of the Italian Foreign

Ministry, Count Zoppi, in relation to the Arabs in general and to Egypt in particular, have been proven false. Zoppi simply did not understand the developments in the Arab world, which seeks to liberate itself from foreign domination.

Sasson believes that Count Zoppi failed to understand that Italy cannot compete with the Great Powers and that it can help the Arabs only by joining the chorus of those warning against the "injustice" being done to the Arabs by the imperialist states.

Sasson agrees that an increasing inclination for closer ties with Israel can be discerned in the Italian Foreign Ministry, but he rejects Toscano's hypothesis that it is merely a natural reaction to Taviani's rabidly anti-Israel position. Sasson believes that it stems from recognition of Israel's very existence and from appreciation of Israel as a vibrant and progressive element in the Middle East. In addition, a new line of thought has been developed by the director of the Italian Foreign Ministry's political department, Giulio del Balzo di Presenzano, namely, that friendship with Arab countries need not be an impediment to good relations with Israel. This view has coalesced for two reasons: (1) Israeli information efforts over the past five years; (2) the good relations Israel has developed with several countries that have vital interests in the Middle East, such as the United States, Great Britain, France, and Turkey. The Italians have come to realize that Israel is a factor that cannot be disregarded and whose friendship should not be rejected, and that their former attitude should be remedied forthwith. In this spirit, the formation of an Italy-Israel Chamber of Commerce in Milan has been well received in Italy. Israel's demands for a trade agreement with Italy have fallen upon attentive ears.

Sasson suggests that Toscano's willingness to present Israel's problems to De Gasperi and other Italian statesmen in the right light should be welcomed. He asks Najar for his opinion.

Note

1. See No. 125 and notes.

333. M. Avidan (Bucharest) to Sh. Bentsur. 12 August 1953

Orig.: 130.11/2503/2

Avidan reports on a talk with Merozi of the Rumanian Foreign Ministry, whom he approached about the immigration to Israel of divided families. At first Merozi pretended that the subject was the emigration in general of Jews to Israel and stated that this issue had already been discussed in the

past, including with Ben-Gurion and Sharett,[1] but the Rumanian government's policy remains unchanged. Bentsur told Merozi that there was a misunderstanding: he had not come to discuss the general issue of emigration but only to request that members of divided families be allowed to emigrate. After the misunderstanding had been cleared up Bentsur again presented the humanitarian nature of the problem. When Merozi asked about the number of people involved, Bentsur stated that it is in the thousands and offered to submit a detailed list of all the cases.

Merozi did not respond to the proposal but said he would take it up with the foreign minister and meet with Bentsur again.

Avidan adds that this conversation differed from previous ones in several respects: (1) Merozi evinced an interest in details. In Avidan's experience with the Rumanian Foreign Ministry, answers are usually drafted in advance and his interlocutors generally try to wind up the meeting without delving into details. Avidan tends to interpret the fact that Merozi asked questions and displayed a willingness to protract the meeting as proof that there is some hope for a change in Rumanian policy. (2) He believes that the "misunderstanding" at the beginning of the conversation was intentional. Merozi may have been hinting that the request for family reunification will be approved if Israel drops its principled demand for immigration.

Notes

1. The correct spelling of the name and other details about the individual could not be ascertained. The spelling is not consistent in the original.
2. See Vol. 7, No. 309.
3. Ben-Gurion had a get-acquainted meeting with the first Rumanian minister to Israel on 13 October 1949. On that occasion, Ben-Gurion expressed his concern about the ban on the emigration of Rumanian Jews and added that allowing them to immigrate to Israel would constitute the best tie between the two countries (Ben-Gurion's diary).
4. See Vol. 2, No. 433.

334. E. Najar (Jerusalem) to M. Fischer (Ankara) and Sh. Divon (Paris). 12 August 1953

Orig.: 93.02/180/1

Following U.S. Senate passage of the Middle-East foreign aid appropriation,[1] Najar sends his colleagues a resumé of his discussion with Sharett on the subject[2] and a report on his conversation with the French ambassador on the same matter.[3]

He explains that Israel now means to embark on a vigorous campaign to frustrate the plans to bolster Arab military strength. Because the first countries scheduled to receive such assistance are Syria and Iraq, Israel plans to turn to the British, the French, and perhaps the Turks, who have their own reasons for preventing the rearmament of these countries. Israeli diplomats in Ankara and Paris are being requested to begin talks on this matter. As a start, Najar instructs them to initiate general exchanges of views on the problem, hoping to lead their interlocutors to recognize that on this issue their countries have common cause with Israel. Only if it becomes clear that their positions are fully aligned with that of Israel should the Israeli representatives speak overtly and broach the possibility of action by the Turks and the French. Najar adds that the French and the British tend to think that effective action with the Americans is impossible, and that efforts should be focused in Syria and Iraq. Since Israel is unable to influence developments in those countries, it should try to influence American policy in the region. He emphasizes that British and French action in the Middle East that clashes with American plans may not necessarily be to Israel's benefit. This is why he instructs the representatives not to stop with merely conveying the principle of Israeli-French-Turkish cooperation, but to explore, to the extent possible, the actions that Turkey and France may take.

Najar requests reports on activity in the two capitals and adds that there will be similar contacts with the embassies of Turkey, France, and Great Britain in Washington.

Appendix: Excerpts from a conversation between the director of the Western Europe Division and the French ambassador, 10 August 1953

Najar raised the issue of American military assistance to Syria and Iraq and asked the ambassador to clarify the British and French position on the new American policy in the region. Ambassador Gilbert was somewhat reserved on the subject. He believes that the new American policy has become a *fait accompli* that would be hard to counteract. The French do not attribute much importance to the Congressional debate on cutting foreign aid. What counts is that military aid to the countries of the Near East through the Mutual Security Agency has become an accepted principle in the United States. The U.S. Administration and military could easily expand the scale of assistance by various technical stratagems. The ambassador reiterated that nothing can be done against the new turn in American policy. He noted that their experiences in Iran, Ethiopia, and South America have taught the Americans to use the Mutual Security Agency for intelligence-gathering purposes and to ensure control of the political situation. They have also learned that in this fashion one can neutralize potentially hostile countries.

As the conversation continued the ambassador spoke more frankly, stating that the French and the British are preparing to defend their position in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. Their major efforts will be concentrated in these countries and not necessarily in Washington. For example, they will not encourage these countries to sign the military assistance pact with the United States. Here the interests of Israel, Great Britain, France, and Turkey are identical. Gilbert believes that an explicit plan for cooperation is out of place, but the common interest will be manifested on various occasions. Gilbert noted the excellent relations between the French and Israeli embassies in Washington.

As for Great Britain, the ambassador warned Israel not to embark on serious military operations along its frontiers, because Great Britain will not hesitate to activate its defense pact with Jordan as a way of displaying friendship for the Arabs. However, there is room for talks with the British about the military assistance to Iraq.

Gilbert pointed to the good relations prevailing between France and Turkey. He explained that the Turks, who want to be regarded as the major player in the Middle East, do not view positively an Arab military build-up that might diminish their own importance.

Gilbert revealed that he had submitted his resignation to his foreign minister to protest the instructions he received after the Israeli Foreign Ministry was relocated to Jerusalem. The French foreign minister asked him to stay on; in his telegram he stressed the important role of the French ambassador in Israel and noted that the interests of Israel and France are growing closer with each passing day.

Notes

1. See No. 320.
2. See No. 315 (Editorial Note).
3. The appendix is printed below.
4. See No. 307 (Editorial Note) and No. 308.

335. A. Eban (New York) to M. Sharett. 12 August 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2331/1

Eban reports on a diplomatic reception held in advance of the General Assembly and to mark the end of Rafael's tour of duty. The focus of attention was Tsarapkin, who was accompanied by the Polish and Belorussian representatives and made a point of relaying best wishes from Vyshinsky. The following came to light in conversations during the course of the eve-

ning: (1) The Soviet Union opposes internationalization of Jerusalem and favors direct negotiations. (2) The Americans hope the Jerusalem problem will not be raised; but if it is they will support international supervision of the Holy Places and oppose territorial internationalization. (3) There is no inclination to deal with the Palestine problem, but it is clear that this tendency will not dictate the results of the debate if it comes up. (4) Diplomats close to the Arab camp report vacillation and disagreements on the subject of raising the Palestine problem in general and Jerusalem in particular, because of: (a) their failure at the previous General Assembly; (b) their apprehension that a debate on Jerusalem will demonstrate the United Nations' growing indifference to the idea of territorial internationalization; (c) their fear of an Israeli initiative on this issue; (d) their disappointment at the meeting between the Arab ambassadors and Bedell Smith.[1] No decision has yet been taken; Iraq and Lebanon are applying pressure to raise the subject again, despite the opposition of other countries.

Notes

1. On the occasion of his departure to assume his new post as advisor on Middle East and UN affairs in the Foreign Ministry.
2. The reference is to Bedell Smith's meeting with the ambassadors of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria, and the chargés d'affaires of Iraq and Yemen, held in Washington on 4 August 1953, at which the Arab representatives protested the transfer of the Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem. They contended that the transfer contravened the UN resolution on territorial internationalization and expressed their disappointment with the U.S. response. The acting Jordanian ambassador told journalists, after his visit to the State Department that same day, that Jordan did not support the internationalization of Jerusalem and had had nothing to do with the Arab demarche. (See *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1265–68.)

336. A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram). 13 August 1953

Notes

1. For a detailed report on the meeting, recorded by Goitein on 14 August 1953, see 130.20/2460/8. Cf. *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1293–94.
2. See No. 257, last paragraph.
3. Ibid.
4. See No. 313 (Editorial Note) and No. 314.
5. See No. 335, n. 2.

6. At the meeting, Bedell Smith expressed satisfaction at the renewal of relations between Israel and the Soviet Union and expressed appreciation of the Israeli stand on regional defense. See the report cited in n. 1 above.

337. A. Eshel (Vienna) to the Western Europe Division. 13 August 1953

Orig.: 130.10/2533/22

Eshel proposes a reconsideration of the issue of Israel-Austria relations. He does not believe that Israel should wait until the formal conclusion of the negotiations with the Austrians;[1] the consulate can be upgraded to a legation even before the talks end. He offers several arguments to buttress his stand: (1) The Arabs are consolidating their position in Vienna. In addition to the Egyptian legation, Lebanon and Pakistan have announced the opening of legations there. (2) Diplomatic accreditation would facilitate Eshel's contacts with the Foreign Ministry and other institutions in Vienna. (3) The consulate does not provide its workers with the degree of diplomatic immunity that a legation does. (4) The change would entail a minimal financial outlay.

Eshel proposes that the change be made in early October.[2]

Notes

1. The reference is to negotiations between Jewish organizations and the Austrian government on reparations to Austrian Jews. Goldmann met with the Austrian chancellor and his ministers on 17 June 1953; the official negotiations got under way in Vienna on 24 June. The first stage of the negotiations was concluded on 14 July. A joint communiqué, issued on 28 July, noted the following agreement: (1) The Austrian government was prepared to amend the laws that had so far barred Austrian Jews who had renounced their citizenship or had not returned to Austria after the war from receiving compensation. (2) Negotiations on confiscated property and heirless property would be resumed in September. On the later negotiations, see No. 414 and note. (See also the review of the negotiations, dated 12 January 1954, appended to a letter of the same date from Eytan to the Israel Missions Abroad, 130.11/2511/13.)
2. One sentence has been omitted here.
3. Eshel's proposal did not receive a positive response. Levavi explained to him that "the Government has not yet formed a definitive attitude towards the possibility of establishing diplomatic relations with Austria; the negative considerations are extremely serious" (Levavi to Eshel, 28 September 1953, 130.10/2533/22). Only in early August 1955, after the Jewish organizations completed their negotiations with the Austrian government, was the Israeli consulate in Vienna raised to the rank of consulate-general.

338. A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram). 14 August 1953

Notes

1. See No. 335, n. 2.
2. The reference is to a communiqué issued by the Israel Embassy in Washington on 5 August, in response to the declaration by the heads of the Arab missions, made public the previous day. Israel accusing the Arabs of undermining all plans for UN supervision of the Holy Places and provided a chronological review of positions adopted by the United States since 1948 against the territorial internationalization of Jerusalem, which would infringe on Israeli and Jordanian sovereignty, and of its own support of international supervision of the Holy Places. (See Information to Israel Missions Abroad, 17 August 1953, 130.10/2523/15.)
3. See No. 335.

339. M. Sharett to the Israel Embassy in Washington (telegram). 16 August 1953

Note

1. At their next meeting, on 21 August, Sharett gave an affirmative answer to Russell's question (see No. 350, n. 1). At that time, however, Russell informed him that it had been decided to postpone the mission's arrival and that no new date had been set for its departure. Sharett found it hard to assess whether the change was due to American fears of an Arab refusal or was a sign that the Arab countries did not want to receive the mission (see Sharett to the Israel Embassy in Washington, telegram IW665, 23 August 1953, 130.09/2309/14).

340. M. Fischer (Ankara) to the Eastern Europe Division. 16 August 1953

Orig.: 130.10/2536/12

Fischer reviews relations between Israel and Turkey and notes that these have been quite good recently. If Solel Boneh is awarded the contract to construct three airfields in Turkey, it will be a sign that Israel's enemies have failed to derail the emerging relations between the two countries. He makes special mention of the role of the legation in Ankara in winning the contract. Fischer warns, however, that these relations could turn sour overnight and proposes that they be handled more carefully than those with other countries. He warns that even a mild affront to a member of

the Turkish mission in Israel, or a press report on matters of contention between Israel and Turkey (Turkish property in Israel, Turkish nationals in Israel, trade relations), and the like, could instantly put an end to a seemingly stable friendship. He asks his colleagues in Israel to act cautiously.

341. M. Sharett [Tel Aviv] to Ch. Yahil (Cologne). [16 August 1953]

Orig.: 130.02/2457/10

Sharett appends a report he received from Giora Josephthal after the latter's return from a European tour.[1] In its wake, Sharett instructs Yahil to meet with Blankenhorn and ask him to explore the following with his contact: (1) How interested is Egypt in reaching a settlement with Israel? (2) When will Egypt be willing to begin negotiations or initiate some other steps towards peace? (3) What procedure does Egypt propose to use to achieve this? (4) Under what terms will it be willing to reach a final peace accord?

Sharett instructs Yahil to make it clear to Blankenhorn that Sharett's approach to him is based on personal trust and should be treated as a personal appeal. He is asked not to disclose to his contact that the inquiry originated with Israel but to present it as an initiative and interest of the German Foreign Ministry.

Yahil is instructed to add that Israel is continually receiving reports about the Egyptian position and the climate towards Israel in Cairo. These arrive both directly and in roundabout ways, but Israel is interested in receiving any reliable information from other sources to flesh out the picture and check the reliability of its sources. This is why it is interested in information from Blankenhorn's source.[2]

Sharett asks Yahil to send him without delay a detailed report on his talk with Blankenhorn. Yahil may show this letter to Shinnar, but to no one else, and should treat the entire matter as strictly confidential.

In an accompanying letter, Sharett explains to Yahil that he—and no one else in the delegation—has been entrusted with this task because this is a purely political mission that has nothing to do with the reparations and Yahil is the Foreign Ministry's representative in the delegation. He hopes that Blankenhorn will not ask why it is Yahil who has contacted him. But if he does ask, Yahil should respond in the spirit of the foregoing remarks. Sharett hopes that Shinnar will not make difficulties and asks Yahil not to inform him of the existence of this second letter.

Notes

1. It is not clear whether this letter was sent: see n. 3 below.
2. The report has been omitted here. In paragraph (1), Josephthal reported on his brief talk on 30 July with Blankenhorn about implementation of the reparations agreement. At the end of that meeting Blankenhorn informed him of two conversations he had had with Wilhelm Fuss, one of the most prominent of the Nazi German experts who had been working in Egypt, on his activities there. Blankenhorn had inferred from Fuss's remarks that Egyptian hatred of Israel was diminishing, because the Suez Canal problem had become the dominant issue in Egyptian political life. In some Egyptian government circles there was even an inclination to enlist the support of the U.S. government for a British evacuation of the canal zone by expressing a desire for a settlement with Israel. Josephthal asked whether he had details of possible proposals by Naguib's government to Israel. Blankenhorn replied in the negative, adding that he would know more if he asked Fuss to conduct exploratory talks on this matter in Cairo (11 August 1953, 130.02/2457/10).
3. Walter Eytan, the director-general of the Foreign Ministry, had reservations about Sharett's instructions, cast doubt on their consequences, and advised him not to continue with this matter. He wrote that he was not questioning the actual decision to use a German who had served in the SS as an intermediary, once Sharett and the Prime Minister had so decided; but he did have reservations about approaching Blankenhorn, because of his doubtful reliability. Eytan wrote that Israel did not need the mediation of such people to get through to Egypt. "If conditions are ripe, they will reach us through other channels too." (See Eytan's memorandum to Sharett, 16 August 1953, ibid.)
4. A personal letter to Yahil, which Sharett appended to the memorandum, has been omitted here. In the letter Sharett explained that he had decided to charge Yahil rather than Shinnar with this political assignment because the former represented the Foreign Ministry in the reparations delegation.

342. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (New York). 17 August 1953

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2330/14

Eytan informs Eban that, on instructions from the Foreign Ministry, Avner has contacted the Soviet ambassador in Budapest concerning the opening of their legation in Jerusalem when relations are restored. This came in the wake of the Russians' sympathetic attitude at the reception hosted by the UN mission and after Tsarapkin's remark to Rafael that the Soviet Union firmly opposes internationalization.[1] Eytan recommends that the members of the UN mission, too, press the Russians on this matter and explain to them that opening a new legation in Tel Aviv would create a negative impression among the Israeli public and that in any case most of the legations will be moving to Jerusalem shortly. He suggests explaining

that establishing a legation in Jerusalem does not commit them in principle to a position on the Jerusalem issue. Eytan asks Eban to act quickly[2] because the Soviets will be making their decision soon.

Notes

1. See No. 335, paragraph (1).
2. In a speech to the Supreme Soviet on 8 August, Prime Minister Malenkov mentioned Israel as one of the countries with which the Soviet Union wished to maintain good relations. He said that the Soviet government assumed that the renewal of diplomatic relations with Israel would be conducive to the development of cooperation between them.
3. Eban met with Tsarapkin on 18 August, informed him that Israel favored the opening of the Soviet legation in Jerusalem, and put forward the arguments contained in Eytan's telegram. Tsarapkin explained that the matter was not within the competence of the Soviet delegation to the United Nations, but promised to pass on the information to his government. (See Lourie to the United Nations Division, 21 August 1953, 130.11/2512/24.)

343. A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram). 18 August 1953

Notes

1. The reference is to the State Department's first communiqué, issued on 11 July, after it received notification of the transfer of the Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem. The communiqué stated that the transfer contravened UN resolutions on the international character of Jerusalem and that the United States had no intention of moving its embassy to Jerusalem.
2. See No. 316, n. 2.

344. Sh. Kaddar (Prague) to the Eastern Europe Division. 18 August 1953

Coded Tel.: P272; Inc.; 130.09/2343/3

Kaddar reports that the trial in Prague has been held.[1] The list of those convicted and the sentences meted out to them correspond to the first reports that reached the legation, but the identity of the Israeli convicted has not yet been ascertained. Contrary to initial reports, the defendants were officially represented by three lawyers. The verdict stated that the defendants had been convicted of being traitors to the regime, not of being Jews or Zionists.

He reports that the expected reshuffling of the Prague government has not taken place. In the meantime, the sale of certain commodities at reduced prices for a limited time has been announced. The foreign minister remains in his post but will not attend the UN General Assembly.

In response to a telegram from the Ministry,[2] Kaddar reports that he has been informed that his meeting with the foreign minister will take place in another week or so. He suggests beginning the discussion in accordance with Sharett's cable.[3] Kaddar believes that the minister may deny knowledge of the matter because he is duty-bound to do so, but it is possible that he really is in the dark. Be this as it may, Kaddar will ask about the fate of the convicted Israeli. If the foreign minister confirms that the trial took place, Kaddar intends to vigorously protest the prosecution of an Israeli without notification to the legation and to demand his release. He will also demand the release of the second Israeli, who has not yet been tried. Kaddar asks for further instructions on how to act.[4]

Kaddar adds that, in his opinion, the secrecy with which the trial was conducted indicates apprehension about world public opinion. He proposes that Israel exploit this and threaten a worldwide propaganda campaign about the trial, as well as with regard to 60 persons in Bratislava awaiting trial for Zionist activities.

Notes

1. The reference is to the trial of an Israeli, Shimon Orenstein, which opened on 5 August 1953. Orenstein, along with ten or more other Jews, was charged with espionage, sabotage, and treason. He was condemned to life imprisonment. For the circumstances of his arrest, see Vol. 7, No. 51, and n. 2 there.
2. Kaddar was asked to act in accordance with Sharett's telegram (n. 3 below) and meet urgently with the Czechoslovak foreign minister or his deputy. He was instructed to ignore at that meeting any rumors about the trial and to press for clear information on the fate of Oren and Orenstein (Eastern Europe Division to the legation in Prague, 17 August 1953, 130.09/2342/18).
3. Sharett instructed Kaddar to ask for a meeting with the highest-ranking official in Prague and clarify the fate of the two Israeli citizens, Oren and Orenstein, who had been imprisoned for eighteen months. He added that all previous questions about them had been answered to the effect that the investigation had not yet been completed or had simply been ignored. He instructed Kaddar to explore the possibility of expediting their release by an appeal at the level of heads of state, while making it clear that Israel would not involve its president without previous assurance that such an appeal would receive a positive response. If the proposal for intervention at the level of heads of state did not meet with a positive response, Kaddar should express regret and astonishment at this unprecedented behavior towards the citizens of a foreign state (28 July 1953, 130.09/2342/18).
4. Mordecai Oren, whose trial began on 25 October 1953.

5. Sharett approved paragraph (D) and asked Kaddar to emphasize an appeal to the president. If the answer he received on the verdict against either one of the Israelis was not satisfactory, he should hint that Israel would raise the issue of the two Israelis at the United Nations. (See Eastern Europe Division to the legation in Prague, telegram 532, 20 August 1953, 130.09/2342/18.)

   Kaddar met with the Czechoslovak foreign minister on 21 August. The interview, as he put it, produced "zero results." The foreign minister told him that the case of the two Israelis "was being heard by the competent institutions. When the results are known he will be informed." He refused to express an opinion about an appeal to the president of Czechoslovakia, but stated that he would not recommend that the president intervene. The foreign minister added that he had not heard any rumors about the trial of an Israeli. Kaddar gained the impression that the foreign minister was speaking sincerely; hence he did not mention the possibility of raising the matter at the UN. Kaddar proposed waiting two weeks for an official reply. If one had not been received by then, the foreign minister should be approached again, more forcefully. (See Kaddar's telegram to the Eastern Europe Division, 21 August 1953, 130.09/2343/3.)
6. On the verdicts, see No. 487 and notes there.

345. M. Amir to the Western Europe Division. 19 August 1953

Notes

1. See Nos. 288 and 298.
2. See Vol. 5, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, p. 240.

346. A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram). 19 August 1953

Notes

1. See No. 313 (Editorial Note) and No. 314.
2. See No. 335, n. 2. At the end of July, the Jordanian cabinet declared Jerusalem the second capital of the kingdom.
3. On 16 July, the representatives of six Arab countries at the United Nations submitted to the UN secretary-general identical letters of protest against the transfer of the Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem. But as of 15 August, which was the deadline for adding items to the provisional agenda of the Eighth General Assembly, the Arabs had not asked that Jerusalem issue be included.
4. See No. 343, n. 1.
5. See No. 316, n. 2.
6. On 17 August, the Jordanian foreign minister informed Bennike that Israel had reinforced its military units in the Jerusalem area and demanded that the UN investi-

gate the matter. He also demanded that the UN conduct an inspection of the Mt. Scopus enclave. (See Ilan to Eytan, 30 August 1953, 130.16/2949/2.)

7. See No. 323, paragraph 12, and n. 7 there.
8. Cf. ibid., paragraphs 24 and 25.
9. Around this time, Eban left for consultations in Israel. En route he stopped off in Paris to participate in a consultation on Israeli policy in the Middle East (see No. 356 and n. 1 there). For further details on the meeting with Byroade, see the report written by Goitein, 20 August 1953, 130.20/2460/6; compare *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1291 and 1293–94.

347. A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram). 20 August 1953

Notes

1. The reference is to a disagreement concerning the composition of the conference of representatives of the two sides for a settlement of the Korean issue, which was to be debated at the third session of the Seventh General Assembly, which convened on 17–28 August. The United States was against the participation of India in the conference, on the grounds that only the parties that had fought in Korea should be represented. The U.S. position was opposed by Great Britain and the Commonwealth countries, France, and other NATO countries, as well as by the Arab and Asian countries. This bloc argued that the conference was representing the United Nations and that any country whose participation could contribute to its success should take part in it. (For details of the debate, see *Yearbook of the United Nations,* 1953, pp. 121–28.)
2. Sharett instructed Eban to vote in favor of India, on the assumption that its candidacy would not be put forward unless a majority were ensured it. Lodge was to be informed that Israel was guided chiefly by the desire to improve relations with Asian countries. Eban should inform the Indians that Israel was voting for them despite the pressures being exerted on it (Eytan to Eban, telegram Y312, 21 August 1953, 130.09/2330/14).

   Ben-Gurion, who had received the text of this telegram, added the following marginal note: "If the English do not insist on India's participation—we certainly should not insist on it. But even if the English want to include India—we must still consider whether we should prefer India's dignity to the wishes of the United States." On this issue, compare No. 354 (Editorial Note) and No. 355, n. 4; see also Nos. 349 and 350.

348. Sh. Divon (Paris) to E. Najar. 23 August 1953

Orig.: 130.10/2539/15

Divon reports on a talk with de Margerie on 22 August. De Margerie expressed satisfaction at the closer relations between Israel and France in recent months, as manifested, in part, by the signing of a commercial

agreement and the successful conclusion of the weapons deal.[1] He expressed his delight that he was able to keep his promise and help bring the transaction to a successful resolution.

Divon brought up the Jerusalem problem, which continues to cast a shadow on bilateral relations. De Margerie regretted that this issue is a bone of contention but expressed his hope that it is a dispute between friends. He added that France is not considering raising the problem at the UN; should it come up, however, the French will have to draw the conclusions that follow from their public stance on the issue.

De Margerie redefined the principles that guide France's Middle East policy. The French have no interest in the establishment of the Unified Arab Command. The only solution they believe would prevent Russian expansion is a defense plan based on Turkey, Israel, and, to some extent, Syria. Israel is the most serious military power in the region, whereas the Arab states cannot be relied on. However, he estimates that in the event of war the Arab countries will not interfere if the West has military superiority. He also foresees at some stage a bilateral arrangement between the West and Israel that would strengthen the military potential of both.

He said that the French ascribe great importance to developing, strengthening, and training the Syrians. They believe that through such encouragement, coupled with a restraining influence, they can mold this country into one that the West can rely on to some extent.

De Margerie stated that the French do not believe the American military assistance plan, with its allocation of $30 million, will contribute to regional stability. Neither are they enthusiastic about the prospect of American penetration of Syria by means of this assistance. To the best of their knowledge, the Americans do not have a clearly articulated plan.

He added that on various occasions the French have expressed their dissatisfaction with America's conciliatory policy and their doubts about the necessity and utility of the military assistance plan. However, since the plan is at an early stage and its practical goals are not sufficiently clear, no official action has been taken in the matter.

As for Damascus, there is no telling how things will turn out and whether Syria will swallow the bait. But it will be hard to persuade Shishakli to sign commitments as a condition for receiving this assistance. The French, of course, will do everything they can to keep Shishakli from accepting American aid.

Note

1. See No. 328.

349. W. Eytan to the Israel Delegation to the United Nations (telegram). 23 August 1953

Notes

1. See No. 347 and nn. 1 and 2 there.
2. Eban spoke in the Political Committee of the General Assembly on 21 August. He expressed open support for Soviet participation in the Korea conference. Regarding India, however, he said that the main consideration that would determine how Israel voted was the principle that the conference should be successful in attaining an agreement.

350. A. Eban (Paris) to M. Sharett. 24 August 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2345/2

In reply to Sharett's cable,[1] Eban explains that Israel is free to vote against coopting India to the Korea Committee, on the grounds that there is no point in forcing the United States and South Korea to accept a member they do not want. If the matter comes up for a vote, however, it would be absurd for Israel to be forced to dissociate itself from Asia, the Western Bloc, the Commonwealth, and almost all of NATO. In Eban's opinion, there is no doubt that Israeli public opinion will reject such obvious boot-licking with regard to a position that the entire progressive world considers objectionable. Eban adds that the U.S. envoy to the General Assembly (Lodge) will be in a sticky personal situation if he fails to carry the day; but it is unfair of him to ask the Israeli envoy for help. Therefore, Eban proposes telling Lodge: (1) It was not Israel that suggested coopting India, but Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, whose armed forces fought in Korea; hence Israel should not be accused of supporting an irresponsible initiative. If he can persuade those countries to withdraw their proposal, Israel will be pleased that the impasse has been broken. (2) India, which has done much to put an end to the bloodshed and repatriate the PoWs, might be able to help all the armies come home. (3) Were Israel in India's shoes, it would not thrust itself in where the United States does not want it. Israel is prepared to suggest privately to India that it withdraw its candidacy. (4) However, if the matter is brought to a vote, Israel will have to act according to its conscience and in keeping with the views of the entire region and most of the Western powers. The United States itself would lose respect for Israel if it votes contrary to its principles. (5) Lodge must not turn the issue into a question of friendship. Israel has shown greater sensitivity to his predicament than countries whose sympathy for the United States is unquestioned and whose formal commitments to the

United States are stronger than Israel's. As he continues to serve at the UN he will have many opportunities to appreciate Israel's commitment to the Western cause. (6) Israel believes that the Korea Committee will succeed and the return home of the armies will be expedited if important peace-loving Asian states such as India take part. (7) Israel will not insist on the addition of India to the committee if the proponents of the idea drop it. (8) Lodge should take account of the responsibility that Israel will bear if its abstention torpedoes the British Commonwealth proposal. If India is elected to the Committee, however, Israel will be in the company of most of the Free world.

Eban points to a paradox in American policy, which refuses to allow its representatives to travel to Jerusalem while asking Israel to risk ostracism from the entire region and continent over a matter that is certainly of only secondary importance to the United States.

Eban adds that Israel will vote against the Soviet proposal[3] and in favor of the two American motions.[4]

Notes

1. Sharett reported on his urgent meeting with Russell on 21 August. Russell informed him of the U.S. position as to Soviet and Indian participation in the Korea conference and asked for Israel's support (see Nos. 347 and 349). Sharett expressed understanding of the Americans' stand and promised to weigh Israel's position after consultation with the UN delegation. He explained to Russell, however, that in view of the Arab boycott of Israel it had a special interest in establishing relations with democratic and stable countries in Asia; India was a key to this. He expressed the hope that the United States would understand this underlying consideration. In the last part of the telegram, Sharett asks whether Eban's speech (No. 349, n. 2) committed Israel to a specific stance (23 August 1953, 130.09/2377/1).
2. The reference is to the draft resolution on the participants in the conference, which named the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, France, the People's Republic of China, India, Poland, Sweden, Burma, South Korea, and North Korea (see *Yearbook of the United Nations,* 1953, pp. 121–22).
3. The first was a draft resolution proposal, submitted by 15 countries and favored by the United States, to convene a political conference to settle the Korean question. The second motion dealt with compensation to soldiers who had fought with the UN forces in Korea (ibid.).

351. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Paris. 24 August 1953

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2345/3

The Ministry reports on Kollek's talk with Lewis Jones in Cyprus.[1] Jones

commented on the stability of the Naguib regime, despite the economic problems. He has no rivals, neither in the Wafd party nor in the Muslim Brotherhood. Everyone's attention is focused on terminating the British occupation. Jones does not believe the current Suez negotiations will succeed, because the British are inflexible, while the United States has entangled itself and made the situation more complicated by arousing anti-British feeling and deluding the Egyptians. Jones believes that peace with Israel is farther away now than formerly. The Egyptians admit that they lost the battle but believe they won the war through the boycott and blockade. They are confident that Israel will collapse; the Arab world merely needs to wait 20 years. All the Egyptian talk about turning to peace once the Suez problem is solved is just talk, intended for American consumption. An Israeli declaration that it supports Egypt in its struggle against the British might make an impression but would not solve the problem.

Notes

1. The two met in Cyprus on 17 and 18 August. See the report on the talks, 23 August 1953, 130.02/2415/1.
2. *Al-Ihwan al-Muslaimeen*, the Muslim Brotherhood.

352. Editorial Note

Aide-Mémoire *from the Governments of the United Kingdom, the United States, and France on the Situation along the Border with Jordan in the Jerusalem Region*

It was the British Foreign Office that initiated the dispatch of the *aide-mémoire* printed below. On 20 August, Whitehall sounded out the State Department, which replied in the affirmative. On 24 August, the American *aide-mémoire* was delivered to the liaison unit of the Foreign Ministry in Tel Aviv. On 27 August, the British envoy delivered his government's *aide-mémoire* (No. 357) to the same address. The British also managed to rope in the Quai d'Orsay: the French ambassador in Israel delivered his government's note on 1 September (No. 360). The texts of the three documents are similar but not identical. (See the exchange of telegrams between the Foreign Office and the State Department, 20 August and 21 August 1953, and between the Foreign Office and the British embassy in Tel Aviv, 22 August and 24 August 1953. See also the text of the British *aide-mémoire* and the report on its delivery in Evans' letter to the Foreign Office, 31 August 1953, PRO, FO371/10478.)

353. *Aide-Mémoire* from Government of the United States to the Government of Israel. 24 August 1953

Notes

1. See No. 346.
2. See *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1292–93.

354. Editorial Note

Government Meeting to Consider Israel's Vote at the United Nations on the Composition of the Korea Conference, 25 August 1953

On 25 August, the Government considered how Israel should vote at the UN on the composition of the political conference to resolve the Korean issue. Sharett presented the arguments for and against supporting the inclusion of India, based on reports from Israel's representatives in Washington and New York (see Nos. 347, 350, and 355, and n. 2 there). Sharett proposed instructing the mission to vote in favor of Indian participation unless there was a fundamental change in the balance of forces, in which case abstention could be considered. Sharett presented the position of Ben-Gurion, who favored abstention (see No. 347, n. 2). Golda Meyerson supported Sharett's proposal. She did criticize India's behavior towards Israel and argued that India did not deserve to have Israel take even the slightest risk for its sake. Nevertheless, it was only right that India participate in the conference, she said, and Israel need not fear the United States. Pinhas Lavon supported voting for India and opposed abstaining. Peretz Bernstein favored abstention, so that Israel would not appear to be a satellite of the United States. Joseph Serlin was opposed to abstaining and supported voting along with the United States; in his opinion, it was better to be a satellite of the United States than to be in the camp of the abstainers. Joseph Sapir favored abstention.

The Government voted 7–3 to support India's participation in the conference, but authorized the Foreign Minister to instruct the delegation to abstain should the composition of the block of abstaining states change.

355. M. Sharett to the Israel Delegation to the United Nations (telegram). 25 August 1953

Notes

1. See No. 354 (Editorial Note).

2. Lourie recommended abstaining on the vote, mainly so as not to harm relations with the United States. He added that they must also take the damage to Lodge's prestige into account, since that would probably sour his relations with Israel in the future (Lourie to Sharett, telegram X863, 24 August 1953, 130.09/2331/1). Eban, Goitein, and other staff of the Embassy in Washington disagreed with Lourie and proposed voting in favor of India's participation. They argued that an independent stance now would not harm Israel in the future; it was worth taking the risk that the United States might respond by making economic difficulties for Israel (Goitein to Sharett, telegram WNT60, 24 August 1953, 93.01/2209/6; see also Eban to Eytan, 26 August 1953, 130.09/2345/2).
3. See No. 349, n. 2.
4. Lourie reported that France, as well as the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg, would abstain, and that Brazil would vote against. The prevailing assessment at the UN was that 18 Latin countries would vote against, so that Israel's vote would not be decisive (Lourie to Sharett, telegram X873, 25 August 1953, 130.09/2331/1).

   When he received Lourie's telegram, Sharett consulted with Ben-Gurion, who again supported abstaining. He explained his position as follows: "It was clear that the French would not vote in favor. Highlighting our independence makes sense if it works in our favor, but not if it is detrimental to our vital interests" (see document with Sharett's statement to Ben-Gurion, August 1953, 43/5596/4106).

   When the Political Committee voted on 27 August, Israel abstained on the question of Indian participation in the political conference; India's membership was not approved. Before the vote in the General Assembly plenum on 28 August, the motion for Indian participation was stricken from the agenda, at the initiative of the Indian representative.

356. G. Rafael [Paris] to W. Eytan. [26 August 1953]

Report: 130.02/2384/14

Rafael sums up the consultations on Israel's Middle East policy held in Paris on 25–26 August.[1] There were four sessions, on the following topics: (1) the trends and problems of British, French, and American policy in the Middle East; (2) the state of the Israel-Arab conflict at the UN; (3) ways and means to end the Israel-Arab impasse. The last session meeting was devoted to summations and conclusions.

I. Conclusions

(1) The basic policy of the three Western powers is to achieve regional defense and economic cooperation. For this reason they are interested, in principle, in peace between Israel and the Arabs.

(2) It should not be assumed that the Western powers are currently capable of and interested in pressuring the Arabs to reach an accord with Israel. However, Israel should brace itself, because the Western powers will be more considerate of Egypt after the Anglo-Egyptian conflict is resolved. If the question of a settlement with Israel comes up then, the Western powers

are liable to support the Arab demands.

(3) Great Britain is not interested in setting up a Middle East Command without Egyptian participation. Therefore it is preventing any steps towards that end until the Anglo-Egyptian dispute has been resolved. France, too, objects to the Command and prefers bilateral arrangements between the Western powers and interested countries. Moreover, France has a special interest in unrestricted transit through the Suez Canal, an artery that links it with its forces in Indochina. The United States is the most interested in establishing a defense system, and accordingly in promoting regional cooperation. But at present it is not willing to compromise its position in the Arab world by pressuring the Arabs to reach a settlement with Israel.

(4) Since 1948, there has been no improvement in Israel-Arab relations. In fact, the situation has worsened in the past year, because the Arabs believe that Israel's international status has declined as a result of the rupture of relations with the U.S.S.R. In addition, Israeli retaliation for infiltration has widened the abyss. Above all, the Arabs continue to pin their hopes on Israel's economic straits.

(5) German incursions into the Middle East, in the form of a strengthened economic position and expanded political influence, is a cause of concern to Great Britain and should engage Israel's attention.

II. Recommendations

(1) Israeli policy-makers do not have reliable information on the current situation and dominant climate of opinion among the decision-makers in the Arab world. Steps should be taken to establish a system of contacts with these elements, and especially with the new leadership generation, so as to promote mutual understanding of the situation in Israel and the Arab countries. This task should be assigned to the diplomatic missions, which should be reinforced by additional staff suited to this activity.

(2) Israel's call for peace is a propaganda asset and a shield against Arab allegations. Nevertheless, the intensity of this call should be lowered. At the same time, it should be pointed out that a continuation of the current state of hostility impairs the Arabs' ability to realize their just claims and improve their economic condition, while imposing a financial and political burden on the Western powers and frustrating their efforts to fashion a regional defense system.

(3) Mediation by foreign powers and individuals should be rejected. They should be called on only to help Israel and the Arab states begin unconditional negotiations and to refrain from policies or demarches that encourage the Arabs not to accept the situation.

(4) Israel should not make unilateral concessions in the form of gestures. It should rather insist that any Israeli step be reciprocated by the Arabs. Israel should agree to a gradual resolution of the issues that are matters of contention, but only on the basis of the declared goals of the armistice

accords and UN resolutions. This gradual process should lead to the establishment of permanent peace.

(5) Israel should pursue continual and concentrated efforts to reach an accord with the Arab countries. Israeli policy should be the outcome of its own initiatives and not of reactions to situations created by the Arabs. Hence Israel should define its plans for solving outstanding problems down to the smallest detail. Contingency plans should be drafted for payment of compensation, exchange of border zones, joint economic development, and the like.

(6) The advantages accruing from the armistice agreements should be exploited. Perhaps the time has come to invoke Article VIII of the agreement with Jordan. Another point to examine is the circumstances under which Article XII, Paragraph 3 of the agreement with Egypt may be invoked. For this, too, detailed plans should be prepared. Furthermore, the situation created by the Egyptian violation of the Security Council resolution on Suez should be reviewed. Has the time come to raise the issue again, in an appropriate fashion, in the international arena?

(7) Consultations about the nature of the Israeli response to infiltration should be made with all relevant parties, in order to find effective methods to combat infiltration without harming Israel's international stature and without widening the gulf between it and the Arab countries.

(8) Because the mixed armistice committees are the only official channel of contact between Israeli and Arab representatives, the Israeli delegations must take account of long-term political considerations instead of settling for limited and temporary advantages.

(9) Detailed plans for Israel's contribution to regional defense should be worked out, based on the assumption of direct cooperation with Turkey and its allies, both in the Balkans and in the West, and of no Arab participation in a Western defense system.

(10) The Arab states believe that economic warfare is the most effective weapon for bringing Israel to its knees. Israel should make special efforts to confront the economic hostilities and frustrate them. A campaign must be mounted against economic warfare, enlisting the Western states and the UN in the cause. Countermeasures that harm the Arab economies should be developed, accompanied by a broad-based propaganda campaign against the boycott and blockade policies of the Arab countries, which are contrary to their international commitments and directly damage Western interests. If a fund is set up to pay compensation to Arab refugees, it should also be used as a means to eliminate economic warfare.

(11) An information and propaganda campaign directed at the Arabs should be developed, including the Arabic-language broadcasts of the Voice of Israel. The goal should be to familiarize Arab listeners with the realities and intentions of Israel and to help them come to grips with the fact of the existence of this new and—for them—alien factor.

(12) Special efforts should be made to strengthen relations with the peoples of Asia as a means of integrating into the continent and isolating Arab hostility.

(13) To carry out the recommendations, the government should promote cooperation and coordination among all Israeli agencies connected with the Arab-Israeli conflict. The new Foreign Ministry department of Middle East and United Nations Political Affairs should be given the means and authority to devote all its activity to the overseas arena. The participants in the consultation promised full cooperation with the head of the new department. Special staffs should be posted to every relevant diplomatic mission to handle the "Arab campaign" while maintaining ongoing contact with the new department.

Notes

1. The memorandum was prepared for the consultation chaired by Sharett, held on 7 September (see No. 365 below).
2. The consultation took place on 24 and 25 August. The participants were: A. Eban, E. Elath, E. Sasson, R. Shiloah, Sh. Divon, G. Rafael, M. Kidron, and Sh. Syrkin, the military attaché to the western European countries. The consultation was held in preparation for the inauguration of the new bureau for Middle East and UN political affairs in the Foreign Ministry, headed by Gideon Rafael. For a report on the meeting, see File 130.02/2408/10.
3. See No. 109, n. 3.

357. Note from the Government of Great Britain to the Government of Israel. 27 August 1953

Note

1. For the circumstances that led to the submission of the memorandum, see No. 352 (Editorial Note).

358. A. Nissan (Stockholm) to E. Najar. [28][1] August 1953

Copy: 130.02/2404/12

Nissan reports on a meeting with the Swedish foreign minister, Undén, on 28 August. Nissan raised Israel's problems at the United Nations in advance of the coming General Assembly. (1) Jerusalem: Nissan said that since the Jerusalem item is not on the agenda of the General Assembly,

there is no reason to bring up the Swedish proposal for discussion.[2] Undén confirmed that they had no intention of taking any action regarding Jerusalem. Nissan said that Israel regrets the American reaction to the transfer of the Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem and the position taken on contacts with the Ministry in its new home. In practice, he added, there has not been any change in the Americans' favorable attitude to a positive solution of the Jerusalem problem in the spirit of the Swedish proposal. Undén noted that it is not beneficial or useful to take a favorable position in theory and a negative position in practice. There is no sense to maintaining a diplomatic representation in the country while forbidding its members to have contacts with that country's foreign ministry. What is more, the location of the Foreign Ministry does not require moving the representatives' place of residence, since the distance between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv is not that great.

(2) The refugee problem: Nissan said that the Arab governments are refusing to cooperate with the UN agencies to resettle the refugees and called Undén's attention to the conclusions of the U.S. Senate committee, wherein the Arabs were warned that the U.S. government would not agree to provide direct support to the refugees forever. Undén was interested in these conclusions and asked if there was room to resettle all the refugees in the Arab countries. Nissan said that if Israel could absorb 750,000 new immigrants, including 300,000 from Arab countries, it is certainly possible to settle a like number of Arab refugees in the vast spaces of the Arab states, using UN funds, instead of wasting hundreds of millions on maintaining refugee camps.

(3) Korea and China: Undén expressed concern at the situation created after the votes in the Political Committee.[1] The American position sabotages the prospects for the conference. Keeping India out of the conference is a great mistake. The new situation also defers a solution to the problem of China's admission to the United Nations. Nissan said that Israel agrees in principle with Scandinavians on these questions. As an Asian state Israel is interested in cooperation with India and in normal relations with China. Undén confirmed that Sweden would vote to admit China to the United Nations.

(4) Admission of new members to the United Nations: Undén reported on his intention, at the next General Assembly, to try to solve the problem of the admission of new countries to the United Nations. Perhaps the U.S. and Soviet Union would agree to admit some of the countries of Western and Eastern Europe, perhaps along with Libya and Ceylon, while passing over the countries of Indochina, the two Koreas, and so on. He fears there will be American opposition to the admission of Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania. The question will be raised at the conference of Scandinavian foreign ministers.

Notes

1. The original erroneously reads "27 August."
2. The reference is to a draft resolution submitted by Sweden to the Fifth General Assembly in 1950, but never put to the vote, whose chief point was the institution of international supervision of the Holy Places in Jerusalem by a commissioner accountable to the General Assembly. See Vol. 5, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, pp. 256–57.
3. See Nos. 347, 349, 350, and 355.

359. Sh. Divon (Paris) to the Western Europe Division. 28 August 1953

Copy: 93.02/177/2

Divon reports on a conversation with de Margerie on 27 August, at which Divon informed him of the diplomatic consultation in Paris.[1]

(1) The Middle East: Divon said that the view is taking shape in the Israeli Foreign Ministry that direct American intervention in the outstanding problems of the Middle East is unlikely to facilitate a solution and may at times even complicate it. Western interest in regional stability should manifest itself in the creation of a favorable climate for exploring the problems and for direct negotiations among the parties, without proposing solutions or active mediation. De Margerie replied that he considers such an approach logical; even some American circles are inclined to refrain from unnecessary activity.

(2) Morocco: American intervention in Morocco began after Roosevelt's famous meeting with the sultan, which led the sultan and his supporters to believe they could expect American assistance in their struggle for independence. Over the past few years American intervention, based on an overestimation of the strength of the Moroccan national movement, has incessantly impeded effective cooperation between the French authorities and the sultan. A change has occurred in the past year and the U.S. has become more considerate of the French position. Two weeks before the sultan was deposed, he appealed for American intervention against France. The American reply was not encouraging; the implication was that he must find a way to cooperate with the French. The State Department protest against the deposition of the sultan was the initiative of a junior official and was later retracted with apologies. Apart from this, there was no American expression of protest. The change in American policy, which will be expressed in the Security Council by U.S. opposition to including the Moroccan problem on the agenda, is a typical and enlightening conclusion to American intervention in Morocco. The attempt to win sympathy

in the Arab world may end with a wave of protests against American treachery.

(3) North Africa: When de Margerie asked about Israel's position on North African issues at the upcoming General Assembly, Divon replied that he assumes that efforts will be made to support the French position as closely as possible, taking account of limitations that stem from Israel's status in the Arab world and Asia and the views of countries that supported Israel's independence. It may be assumed that the Israeli delegation will be willing to maintain unofficial cooperation with the French delegation to the UN on this issue.

(4) The economic boycott: Divon pointed to the boycott as one of the obstacles on the path to Israel-Arab rapprochement. He warned that success in the boycott could be an encouraging precedent for the Arabs in their struggle against the French in North Africa. De Margerie replied that to date he had paid no attention to the psychological and political aspects of the boycott but sees the logic of Divon's remarks. He suggested that Divon meet with the director of the Economic Department at the Quai d'Orsay to explore the problem and the possibilities of breaking the economic blockade of Israel.

(5) With respect to a possible change in British policy towards Israel, in view of the impending accord with Egypt, de Margerie said that his impression is that the influence of Arab League advocates of the Lawrence school is diminishing. Also, he does not believe there is any reason to fear that an Anglo-Egyptian settlement would be detrimental to Anglo-Israel relations.

(6) Summing up the conversation, de Margerie said he understands that there is no substantial worsening in relations between Israel and the new U.S. Administration; the disagreements are of the nature of a dispute between allies. He also has the feeling that the resumption of relations with the Soviet Union has bolstered Israel's international status and disappointed the Arabs. He hopes that the atmosphere of cooperation with France will continue.

Notes

1. See No. 356 and n. 1 there.
2. The reference is to the meeting between the sultan of Morocco and President Roosevelt, in January 1943, during the summit conference in Casablanca. The sultan left the meeting with the feeling that the United States would oppose continued French rule over the Maghreb countries, even though official American sources repeatedly denied that Roosevelt had made any clear and specific promises to the sultan.

360. Note from P. Gilbert to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 1 September 1953

Note

1. For the circumstances surrounding the submission of the document, see No. 352 (Editorial Note).

361. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to the Israel Delegation to the United Nations. 2 September 1953

Coded Tel. 333; Outg.: 130.09/2330/20

Sharett instructs Lourie to meet urgently with Tsarapkin. He recommends that the meeting take the nature of a return visit after the Russians attended Eban's reception.[1] Lourie is requested to tell Tsarapkin about the arrest of Oren and Orenstein in December 1951 and about the failure of Israel's efforts to obtain information from the Czechs as to the charges against them and whether and when they will be prosecuted.[2] Lourie should communicate the concern of the Government of Israel, which considers the Czechs' behavior to be arbitrary and unprecedented, and request that the Soviets look into the matter during the next few weeks.

Notes

1. See No. 335.
2. Cf. No. 344 and notes.

362. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Paris. 4 September 1953

Coded Tel. L883; Outg.: 130.09/2345/3

In response to Divon's cable,[1] Rafael writes that he attaches great importance to the Egyptians' concern and instructs him to convey the following reply:[2] "According to the decision of the Armistice Commission, IDF forces were not involved in the incident,[3] and that is indeed the truth. We have no information as to the course of the incident, which may have been a result of the deteriorating situation along the Israel-Egypt border caused by the proliferation of infiltration, robberies, and acts of sabotage carried

out by residents of the Gaza Strip. The Government of Israel is concerned about the deteriorating situation along its borders, which may lead to complications and be detrimental to vital Egyptian interests. [The Government] therefore expresses its willingness to review the situation that has emerged, at a suitable level and within a suitable framework, to discuss any that may enhance security, improve relations, and coordinate interests."

Rafael adds that in his talk with 'Azmi in Geneva, the latter undertook to influence Naguib and Fawzi to empower Riad to begin early consultations with Israel on ways to improve relations. He promises an answer upon his return from Cairo on 10 September.

Notes

1. Divon reported to Rafael on the request of "my Egyptian friend" (Abd al-Rahman Sadiq), in accordance with instructions he had received from Cairo, to clarify "the meaning of the attack on the refugee camp in Gaza." He asked whether this action "reflects dissatisfaction with the status quo along the borders, and if so, what we want" (1 September 1953, 130.09/2345/2).
2. The reply was formulated in a consultation with Sharett and military personnel. Its drafters believed that it would influence the Egyptians to authorize Riad to open talks with Israel. (See Rafael to Divon, 13 September 1953, 130.15/3772/66.)
3. The reference is to an operation by Unit 101 of the IDF in the el-Bureij refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, on the night between 28 and 29 August. In this operation, 20 residents of the camp were killed and dozens injured. (See A. Sharon to the Chief of the General Staff, 4 September 1953, IDF Archives 756/12.) At an extraordinary session of the Israel-Egypt Mixed Armistice Commission, on 13 August, Israel was condemned for the fact that "armed Israelis" crossed the border and opened fire on residents of el-Bureij. Compare No. 374.
4. 'Azmi failed to show up for a meeting with Israel's representative in Geneva, M. Kahany, when he was in that city between 10 and 12 September. Kahany, who was familiar with 'Azmi's habits, expressed concern that the latter had received a negative response from his sponsors and perhaps even been instructed to break off all contact with him. While on the subject, Kahany criticized the manner in which Rafael had conducted the last talk with 'Azmi and expressed concern that the pressure put on him to take some practical step had caused him unpleasantness in Egypt and led to his silence. Kahany hoped he could clarify the matter if he happened to meet 'Azmi in New York. (See the exchange of telegrams—Rafael to Kahany: telegrams NG199, 14 September 1953, and NG14, 15 September 1953, 130.15/3772/66; Kahany to Rafael, 16 September 1953, 130.02/2410/2.) See also No. 410.

363. J. F. Dulles to M. Sharett. 5 September 1953

Notes

1. See No. 313 (Editorial Note) and No. 314. Dulles's letter, printed here, was not

delivered to Sharett until mid-September. (See No. 369.)

2. See No. 336.
3. See No. 346.
4. See Vol. 7, No. 135 and n. 1 there.
5. See Vol. 7, No. 231, and Editorial Note, Companion Volume, p. 159.
6. See No. 111 (Editorial Note) and No. 112.
7. See No. 209.
8. See No. 343, n. 1.
9. See No. 316, n. 2.

364. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to W. Eytan. 6 September 1953

Orig.: 130.02/2415/22

Sharett summarizes his conversation with David Hacohen: (1) If appropriate conditions take shape at the forthcoming session of the General Assembly, Hacohen will be sent on a good-will mission to Peking. The visit would be intended to serve as an interim stage between mutual recognition without diplomatic relations and normal diplomatic relations. (2) The stage may also be set for a visit to Jakarta. To this end, Hacohen should try to develop friendly relations with the Indonesian envoy in Rangoon. (3) The Ministry will strive to establish diplomatic relations with Thailand. If these materialize, Hacohen will be appointed minister in Bangkok. It would be a good idea to set up a meeting in the United States between Hacohen and the Thai foreign minister, who is attending the General Assembly. (4) Sharett undertakes to make a connection between Hacohen and two men with whom he became friendly in Rangoon.[2]

Notes

1. The reference is to Sharett's proposal, sent to the prime minister and foreign minister of Indonesia in March 1950. See Vol. 5, No. 138 and note 2 there.
2. See No. 3, Editorial Note.
3. The reference is almost certainly to Frank N. Treiger, head of the American Technical Cooperation Administration in Burma.
4. In reply, Eytan disagreed with Sharett's and Hacohen's conclusions. He felt that Hacohen should consolidate his position as Israeli minister in Rangoon and gain the confidence of the Burmese government before "thinking of a mission to Peking." In any case, the visit should be at the invitation of the Chinese government. But even if the initiative came from Israel, it must result from a Government decision and not "from the personal desire of Mr. Hacohen." Eytan was strongly opposed to a visit by Hacohen to Jakarta and supported establishing diplomatic ties with Thailand, but expressed doubt whether it was desirable for the minister in Rangoon to represent Israel in Bangkok post as well (14 September 1953, 130.02/2415/22).

365. Consultation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Jerusalem]. 7 September 1953

Report:[1] 130.15/3753/7

Present at the consultation were: M. Sharett, A. Eban, W. Eytan, S. Bendor, S. Bentsur, J. Herzog, L. Cohen, K. Katz, D. Levine, A. Levavi, Y. Palmon, G. Rafael, Y. Tekoah, M. Elitzur, S. Kahana, and U. Lubrani. The objective was to hear a report and discuss issues raised in the consultation held in Paris on relations with Arab countries.[2]

Eban explained the conclusions and recommendations of that discussion. Regarding the extent to which the Western powers could be used as a means to advance peace between Israel and its neighbors, it was agreed that the Western governments cannot apply effective pressure to the Arab countries to conduct direct negotiations with Israel. Britain and France cannot do so because of their conflicts with the Arab world; but it has recently become evident that the United States, for its own national considerations, is trying not to arouse Arab wrath. It was decided to live with this fact and no longer request the Powers to exert pressure on the Arab countries on this issue. It was agreed that Jewish organizations in England and France must not be allowed to keep using the slogan that their governments must launch an initiative to bring the parties together. However, it was decided to exert influence on the Powers to continue supporting peace, but not to go any further; should a peace initiative emerge, Israel would itself devise the terms for direct negotiations. Israel should also ask the Powers to refrain from declarations and policies that make peace more remote, such as providing arms to the Arabs or accepting Arab intransigence towards Israel. The assumption of the discussion was that the situation in which the Western Powers avoid putting pressure on the Arabs will continue until Britain and Egypt reach an accord and that such an accord will stimulate solutions to the other problems. In the consultation in Paris, the question was raised of the extent to which Israel should reiterate its desire for peace as a way of putting pressure on the Arabs. Sasson demurred at this policy, arguing that continual peace propaganda by Israel is liable to give the Arab camp an impression of distress in the absence of peace; the Arabs will conclude that the boycott and siege of Israel must be tightened and entrench their refusal to talk peace. The participants accepted Sasson's view, but with certain reservations, since on several occasions Israel's pressure on the peace issue had placed the Arabs in an awkward position vis-à-vis world public opinion—for example, at the last session of the UN General Assembly[5] and the Cairo conference of representatives to the armistice commissions.[6] Hence this policy must be weighed in accordance with changing international circumstances.

Another conclusion was that should any agency whatsoever try to mediate between Israel and the Arabs, Israel should demand direct negotiations. Likewise, Israel must oppose the assumption prevailing in American circles that unilateral action on Israel's part could improve the atmosphere and break the deadlock. Experience had shown that Israeli gestures, such as releasing frozen deposits, were of no avail. On the other hand, one should not disqualify arrangements that, although they may not have a direct effect on relations with the Arab world, could promote progress beyond the current situation. In talks with the State Department, the opinion was expressed that Israel should not be asked to implement its commitment on refugee compensation without some far-reaching *quid pro quo*, such as the lifting of the boycott, given that by means of the boycott the Arabs are denying Israel the economic ability to pay compensation.

In a discussion of how to maintain a bridge to the Arabs, the conclusion was that most hopes must be placed on the armistice regime. This regime made it possible to isolate each Arab country and relied on a channel that was already in place. The reference was chiefly to the article in the armistice agreement that provides for the parties to hold talks to amend various articles of the agreement, except for the articles that deal with guarantees of nonaggression. The idea was to prepare the way for initiating talks with Arab countries by transferring the center of gravity to the commissions, perhaps even to enlarge them by adding diplomatic representatives, and to make discussions of nonmilitary matters a routine procedure in the commissions.

As for the border issue, the participants in the Paris discussion recommended that Israel no longer stick to the current borders but should develop claims on modest areas that would not be interpreted as abandonment of the armistice agreement. The aim was twofold: (a) Israel needs certain adjustments, such as a widening of the coastal strip, border rectifications in Jerusalem, access to Mount Scopus, etc. There was no reason for the assumption that the existing borders cause problems only for the Arabs; Israeli claims must be presented too. (b) For tactical reasons, one must assume that any mediation would take into account some form of compromise; hence maintaining the status quo is tantamount to an advance concession on Israel's part. Only additional claims could generate an acceptable compromise. It was decided that the existing borders should be examined and Israeli claims drafted, to accustom the West to the fact that Israel, too, demands border adjustments.

Finally, it was agreed that the Arab economic warfare was a serious obstacle. The implications of a talk between Fawzi and an American official were that the Arabs entertain the hope that the boycott and blockade of Israel could strangle or at least weaken the state. It was agreed that the United States must be persuaded that it was in its interests to fight the economic boycott and the blockade of the Suez Canal, since they placed an

economic burden on the United States, in that it must provide assistance to both Israel and the Arab countries.

Sharett spoke after Eban. He said that it must be explained that the Arab refusal to make peace with Israel is not so terrible. The situation neither endangers Israel nor threatens it with collapse or crisis. Israel has no delusions that peace can be obtained rapidly. It is inconceivable that the neighboring countries' process of adaptation to the new state could take only five years. It would be something of a miracle if peace followed after only five years. Although this argument absolved the Arabs of responsibility, there was still no need to act rashly on the issue of peace. Sharett said that it would be a tremendous accomplishment should peace be attained within the next ten years; but it could take fifteen or even twenty-five years. The jitters and impatience on the peace issue always conceal an inclination to blame Israel for the failure.

Sharett added that Jewish tourists and Zionist leaders had made the demand for peace into a catchword. In their words, one could at times hear resentment against Israel for not having obtained peace. This attitude contradicts the Israeli line.

Concerning the refugees, Sharett proposed another line of thought. The orientation should be that the recompense for paying reparations to the refugees would be the solution of the refugee problem itself. Paying compensation to refugees who must be rehabilitated would remove a serious stumbling-block to this process and help solve the entire problem. He admitted that this was a new approach and was doubtful that the Knesset or even the Government would buy it.

Concerning the Arab boycott, Sharett told his colleagues that he did not wish to alter Israel's rhetoric or declarations on this subject; in the name of precision, though, he was bound to state that the Israeli demand for an end to the boycott is in fact tantamount to a demand for peace; it is difficult to demand a step that implies peace as long as there is no peace. Nor could Israel ask the Americans to force the Arabs to lift the boycott. On the other hand, Israel had a strong argument concerning the Suez blockade and must act on this matter.

On the subject of border adjustments, Sharett said that Israel must explain that it has already renounced significant territory in the armistice agreements, both to Egypt (the Gaza Strip) and to Jordan (control of the West Bank). This matter must be emphasized.

Sharett expressed his reservations about Eban's proposal that the armistice commissions serve as a channel for contacts with the Arabs. It was possible to make life impossible for the other side by close adherence to and literal interpretation of the articles of the cease-fire agreement and it was worth doing so. But there was no point entertaining illusions, since, if Jordan does not wish to implement Article VIII[11] of the agreement, making its life miserable would not bring it any closer to doing so.

Rafael said that, in his opinion, efforts should concentrate on a war against the Arab boycott. He proposed swaying the American leadership and developing forms of pressure on the Arab countries that would interfere with their vital interests. He recommended that the Foreign Ministry gird itself for a campaign against Arab economic warfare and devise a plan to this end.

Palmon drew their attention to the problem of the Palestinians, that is, the rehabilitation of the refugees. He said that the Ministry's overall policy for the Arab countries must take this problem into account as well. Ties with the Palestinians must be restored. A way must be sought that would either solve this problem or lead to the conclusion that there is no solution. The Arabs of Eretz Israel harbored no deep enmity towards Israel. But should 800,000 refugees, whom Israel had harmed politically, socially, and economically, remain in the situation in which they were currently living, this hatred would not disappear for many years and they would begin to seek ways to destroy Israel.

Levavi, too, supported finding a solution to the refugee problem. This was a vital interest for Israel. As long as there were hundreds of thousands of refugees, Israel would be in danger. Like Sharett, he believed that paying compensation to the refugees would benefit Israel. He proposed that a solution be found for the masses, not just for a few people.

With regard to the economic struggle, Levavi said that there was no hope of intervention by the Powers. On the other hand, the problem of the blockade could be solved and it was worth pestering the world about it.

Bendor supported the idea that any talk of peace be merely tactical. He believed that the main task of the new Arab affairs bureau in the Foreign Ministry was not to prepare the way for peace but to find solutions for the serious problems facing Israel, such as the problem of compensation and the Gaza Strip refugees.

Tekoah agreed that paying compensation to the refugees would help solve the problem. He suggested playing down the issue of economic warfare, since excessive stress on it constituted an overt declaration that it bothered Israel. This was a display of weakness and proof of Israel's vulnerability to the Arab boycott.

He also supported Eban's proposal to use the armistice commissions as a channel for a peace offensive against the Arabs. At the same time, he proposed establishing facts on the ground in the areas that Israel would like to incorporate in the context of a peace agreement, such as the demilitarized zones. He proposed establishing settlements in these areas. His approach was that achievements are to be made by progressing beyond the armistice agreements, but within the framework of the agreements. This applied also to partition of the no-man's land in Latrun.

Leo Cohen viewed peace as a psychological problem. The Arabs had received a severe blow which they were finding hard to digest. Everything

must be done to solve the refugee problem, but this would not bring peace any closer. The problem was how to overcome the psychological problem. Perhaps the way to do this was to become stronger and get the Arabs to come to terms with Israel's existence. Perhaps reality would influence them over the course of time. All the plans put forward at the meeting were valuable, but he doubted they would bring peace.

After remarks by J. Herzog and D. Levine, Sharett wound up the meeting. He said that after consultation with Palmon he proposed thinking about a new idea, namely, to pay compensation to individual Arab refugees and not make the payment dependent on large rehabilitation projects. The idea was that groups of refugees in any place who expressed a willingness to be rehabilitated would receive compensation. For example, if a group of 500 families in a particular village or town expressed interest in rehabilitation and 300 of them were eligible for compensation, Israel would pay compensation to the eligibles, provided they helped the remaining 200 families. In every case, payment of compensation would be conditional on the refugees' desire for rehabilitation.

Notes

1. The report printed here is an unedited shorthand account of the meeting. Only minor corrections of obvious errors have been made.
2. See No. 356 and n. 1 there.
3. See No. 163.
4. The reference is to a dinner at Eban's home on 7 August, at which Rafael's appointment was disclosed. See Eliav's report, 21 August 1953, 93.08/357/49.
5. Compare No. 335, paragraph D.
6. The conference was held on 18–27 April 1953.
7. See No. 351.
8. See No. 367, Paragraph 1.
9. See No. 13, n. 2, and No. 28.
10. *Sic.* Apparently should read, "Adenauer's Germany with its neo-Nazis."
11. Article VIII of the Israel-Jordan armistice agreement, which deals with the establishment of a special committee of representatives of the two sides, charged with formulating arrangements to broaden the agreement and improve its implementation (see Vol. 3, Appendix H).
12. The reference is to the committee to discuss the issue of Arab refugees, appointed by the Government at its session of 21 June. Members of the committee were: D. Horowitz, Y. Weitz, Z. Suzayef, Y. Palmon, M. Shatner, A. Levavi, and M. Kremer. The decision to set up the committee was not officially publicized. In December 1953 the committee completed its deliberations and sent a report to Sharett, then acting Prime Minister.

    The committee concluded that the refugee problem was "perhaps the central issue, from the political and security perspectives; its solution is the way towards permanent peace." It recommended a plan for settling the refugees in Arab countries. It

estimated the number of refugees at 700,000 and the cost of their rehabilitation in Jordan, Syria, and Iraq at $300–$350 million. The majority recommendation was to raise this money "by using the last installments of the reparations payments." Assuming that there would be public and moral opposition to this idea, the committee members recommended obtaining the money as a loan from the United States, using the reparations funds as collateral. Y. Weitz opposed this proposal; his position was appended to the committee's report as a minority-of-one opinion. Weitz argued that "it is inconceivable that the reparations from Germany could serve, in any way," to solve the problem of the Arab refugees. "It would be worse than an abomination," he claimed. Nor should this be done indirectly, as the committee was proposing. He proposed a direct appeal to the Jewish people to raise the required sum and was confident that such an appeal would bear fruit. (See the committee's report and the cover letter from D. Horowitz to M. Sharett, December 1953, 130.15/3743/10. See also the committee's session of 15 September 1953, 130.02/2401/22.)

13. A paragraph dealing with the session's agenda has been omitted here.
14. See No. 139 and n. 1 there.
15. See No. 291.
16. See Vol. 6, No. 520.

366. W. Eytan to the Israel Embassy in Washington (telegram). 7 September 1953

Notes

1. Sent also to Paris, London, and Rome.
2. The reference is to the work to divert the Jordan River, as part of the National Water Plan, which began on 2 September in the demilitarized zone south of the Benot-Yaaqov Bridge. The plan was to dig a 2.5-km canal 100 meters west of and parallel to the current course of the river. The water in the canal would drive a power station north of the Sea of Galilee and then flow into the lake. The entire project was to be carried out exclusively on Jewish-owned, private or state land. When work got under way, a *Nahal* settlement—Nahla'im Hayarden—was established adjacent to the demilitarized zone. (See Eytan to Israel Missions Abroad, 2 September 1953, 130.09/2319/4; see also the reports by A. Shalev, 2, 3, and 6 September, 130.16/2954/4.)
3. Sh. Reichman's letter to Tillotson (130.16/2954/4) was sent after two meetings with the latter, at which he agreed to the diversion of the Jordan on condition that the work involved not be carried out on the land of Arabs with whom no settlement had been reached, and on condition that the diversion not affect the Arab residents of Buteiha, who irrigated their fields with water from the Jordan River. (See Shalev to the head of the IDF Operations Branch, 7 September 1953, 130.16/2954/4; see also Eytan's telegram to the Embassy in London, 9 September 1953, 130.09/2319/4.)
4. See the copy in File 130.16/2954/4.
5. In the meeting that took place, with the participation of UN observers and Sh. Reichman, Tillotson tried to renege on his agreement to the project. He maintained that Israel had confronted him with a *fait accompli* and that the Israeli letter did not

include a commitment to guarantee supplies to those who used water from the Jordan River. On the same occasion, Tillotson presented another letter in which he wrote that he could not identify with the project as long as the residents' consent had not been obtained. He asked that Israel cease work to give him time to conduct negotiations. Shalev refused to accept the letter. After pressure, Tillotson agreed to prepare a new letter, which would be drafted after consultation with Bennike.

6. On the State Department's concern about the Jordan River diversion project, see Dulles's telegram to the embassy in Tel Aviv, 8 September 1953, *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, p. 1303; see also No. 370 and n. 3 there.

367. W. Eytan to the Israel Delegation to the United Nations (telegram). 8 September 1953

Notes

1. The reference is to Security Council resolution S/2322 of 1 September 1951. See Vol. 6, Editorial Note, Main Volume, pp. 593–94; Companion Volume, p. 257.
2. On 1 August 1953, the government of Egypt published an amended list of contraband goods that would be confiscated in Egyptian ports en route to Israel. The embargo regulations of 6 February 1950 declared that they were intended to prevent the smuggling of military *matériel* to Israel. The amended list included cotton and motor-vehicle spare parts. Thus "the Egyptians abandoned even the fiction of preventing military *matériel* from reaching Israel" and raised suspicions that they would further extend the list of banned goods (Yaari to Katz, 27 July 1953, 130.15/3744/5; for the list of banned goods, see Avnon's letter to the Western Europe Division, 6 October 1953, 130.06/1797/3.)
3. Riley's report to the Security Council, 12 June 1951, Vol. 6, Editorial Note, Main Volume, pp. 375–77; Companion Volume, p. 162.
4. Lourie submitted Israel's complaint to the president of the Security Council on 9 September. The full text is in File 130.02/2419/1. See also No. 368 and n. 4 there.

368. The Israel Embassy in Washington to the United States Division. 11 September 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.02/2450/1

State Department officials met with staff of the Israel Embassy in Washington to persuade them that Israel should not raise the Suez problem in the Security Council,[1] for the following reasons: (1) the Anglo-Egyptian talks; (2) the apprehension that the Arabs will counter by submitting complaints against Israel, perhaps concerning Gaza,[2] or that the Arabs would bring up Palestine-related issues in the Security Council.

The Embassy staffers replied that Eban will be returning with final instructions on this matter. They stressed the following: (1) For two years the Americans have been claiming that the time is not ripe to raise the issue. (2) The Americans keep hinting to Israel that the Egyptians are easing the blockade, but the incident of the Eilat-bound cargo disproves this. To the Israelis' question—what have the Americans done to help lift the blockade?—the Americans replied that for the past two years they have been reminding the Egyptians that Security Council resolutions must be honored. They hinted that recently, too, they had spoken with the Egyptians about this and added that an anti-Egyptian debate in the Security Council would place the U.S. government in an uncomfortable position. The Israelis replied that they would communicate the U.S. position to their government, but added that the Government of Israel would be astonished at the suggestion that it refrain from approaching the Security Council without a promise of action by the Americans.[4]

Notes

1. See No. 367.
2. See No. 362, n. 3.
3. See No. 137, paragraph 4.
4. Two days later (13 September), apparently due to American pressure, the Egyptians released the ship with its entire cargo, and it sailed on to Eilat (Eytan to the delegation in New York, telegram TNWA210, 14 September 1953, 130.09/2339/1; Ben-Horin to Eban, 17 September 1953, 93.03/3006/3).

369. Meeting: M. Sharett–F. Russell. 12 September 1953

Notes

1. See Nos. 347 and 349.
2. See No. 354 (Editorial Note) and No. 355 and n. 4 there.
3. See No. 243 (Editorial Note).
4. See No. 335, n. 2, and No. 346, n. 3.
5. On the internationalization of Jerusalem, see Vol. 4, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, pp. 281–82.
6. See No. 257.
7. See No. 209.
8. See Nos. 314 and 363.
9. See No. 346, n. 6, and No. 353.

370. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington.[1] 13 September 1953

Coded Tel. 207; Outg.: 130.16/2954/4

Eytan reports on Tekoah's meeting with Fried of the U.S. Embassy on 10 September, concerning the Benot-Yaaqov canal project. Tekoah repeated Israel's commitment not to work on Arab-owned land and to ensure a water supply for Buteiha.[2] He emphasized that the plan is small in scale, intended chiefly to divert the watercourse to produce hydroelectric power, and will not alter the direction of flow. It does not infringe upon the project discussed in the negotiations with the Syrians and therefore need not hinder resumption of the talks. Tekoah told Fried that Syria and Jordan began implementing the Yarmuk project with the support of the Powers and UN agencies, while totally ignoring Israel. By doing so, they established the right of a state to make unilateral use of international rivers in the region. Israel is not behaving as they did. It has begun a small project, while leaving open the possibility of a regional one, should the countries participating in the Yarmuk Project abandon their negative attitude. Tekoah added that the Syrians continue their formal opposition to the land reclamation works and there is no possibility of securing their consent to the new project. On the other hand, work in the Hula Valley has continued undisturbed for two years, after the UN adopted the principle that work on Arab land without the consent of its owners must be avoided. If the UN perseveres in this position, armed intervention in the area of the project will presumably be averted.

Fried replied that the plans and the political arguments presented by Tekoah answer the State Department's questions.

Eytan instructs Lourie to meet at once with Cordier and apprise him of the start of the project, in keeping with previous correspondence,[4] and in accordance with the foregoing information. He notes that it is important that Cordier come away impressed with Israel's confidence in its rights and its ability to control any situation that may develop.[5]

Notes

1. Sent also to New York, London, Paris, and Rome.
2. See No. 366 and notes.
3. The Bet Netofa Valley was intended to serve as the main artificial reservoir in the National Water Carrier project.
4. See No. 139 and n. 1 there.
5. Cf. the report on the talk; see also Russell's support for the State Department's proposal to delay aid to Israel in response to the Israeli step: *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX,

Part 1, pp. 1306–1308.

6. See No. 366 and n. 2 there.
7. The meeting took place after the telegram was received on 14 September. Kidron reported to the Ministry that a Syrian protest had already been lodged with Cordier, who wanted to clarify several points: (a) What military actions were accompanying the work? (b) Was the water supply to Buteiha guaranteed? (c) Was the work being conducted on Jewish-owned land? (d) Would the reservoir to be created near the power station affect Arab land? He hinted that the Syrians were liable to turn to the Security Council (telegram 921, 14 September 1953, 130.09/2331/2).

371. M. Avidan (Bucharest) to Sh. Bentsur. 14 September 1953.

Orig.: 130.11/2503/2

Avidan reports on his activities in Rumania and describes the condition of the Jews there. In an informal meeting he asked Merozi whether he had an answer on the issue of emigration,[1] but the latter replied in the negative. Avidan has asked to meet with him in the next few days and expects Merozi to set a date. In the meantime, rumors of imminent *aliya* are circulating among the Jews; some say that in the provinces Jews have even been summoned to present their documents. There is no way of verifying the truth of this rumor. Avidan credits the development to the atmosphere created during the Youth Festival and the new economic policy. Non-Jewish Rumanian citizens have received passports to emigrate to South America, and this reversal of policy may also apply to Jewish emigration.

As for economic relations, Avidan criticizes the attitude of the policymakers in that sphere. He believes economic relations can decisively influence the political issues and the question of *aliya*; hence it would be expedient to display flexibility in these matters. One should appear to be willing to give, not only to demand. Avidan recommends concluding a commercial agreement with Rumania and avoiding a policy of hesitation. For example, he asserts that the Rumanians are interested in selling oil to Israel and proposes that this initiative be answered in the affirmative.

Avidan reports that in the wake of the changes in economic policy some prisoners, including those sentenced for Zionist activity, have been released; but the amnesty does not include leaders in the movement. Against the limited number of those known to have been released one must juxtapose the fact that the trial of two Rumanian Jews is in the offing. Avidan proposes organizing a vigorous public response by the World Zionist Organization and the World Jewish Congress, since this might keep the case from coming to court. The Communist world is more sensitive to criticism than it has ever been, and this should be exploited. Reference to

the Communist regime should be avoided and attention focused exclusively on Rumania and the imprisoned Zionists.

Notes

1. The copy is in File 130.11/2493/1.
2. In August 1953, an international youth festival was held in Bucharest. The Israeli delegation, consisting of the Mapam Young Guard, received a warm and enthusiastic welcome from Rumania's Jews.
3. See No. 333.
4. On the same occasion, Preoteasa went on to say that he was forced to interpret the question about the cessation of emigration as an intention to interfere in Rumania's internal affairs. (See Avidan to Levavi, 7 June 1952, 130.11/2493/1.)

372. A. Eban (Washington) to W. Eytan. 14 September 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2310/3

Eban spoke with Mahmud 'Azmi[1] at Shannon Airport. 'Azmi told him that Egypt is frightened and concerned about the Suez issue. They are uncomfortable about being attacked at the beginning of the General Assembly. In the spirit of these remarks, Eban proposes continuing to keep the sword suspended over the necks of the Egyptians and the West.[2]

Notes

1. The identification of Eban's interlocutor is based on the exchange of telegrams between Rafael and Eban: telegram 361, 15 September 1953, 130.09/2330/20; telegram 931, 16 September 1953, 130.09/2331/2.
2. See No. 367 and nn. 3 and 4 there.
3. Rafael suggested that Israel continue to demand total abolition of restrictions on passage through the Suez Canal, but tell 'Azmi that Israel would not insist on a public declaration by Egypt and would be satisfied with a confidential promise. (See telegram 361, noted above.)

373. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Delegation to the United Nations (New York). 15 September 1953

Coded Tel.: 358; Outg.: 130.09/2330/20

In response to Eban's telegram about China,[1] Eytan instructs the delega-

tion to oppose the procedural motion unless this would cause serious complications with the United States. The reasons: (1) Last year Israel voted against, and a change in its position would underscore instability in its policy. (2) Displaying independence is a good idea and this is an appropriate opportunity to do so.

Notes

1. Compare No. 318 and n. 2 there. The reference is to the vote on the issue of China's representation at the United Nations. On that day, 15 September, during the opening session of the Eighth General Assembly, the Soviet delegate submitted a draft resolution that the People's Republic represent China in the General Assembly and other UN organs. The United States, supported by the British, moved that debate on this issue be deferred for the duration of the Eighth General Assembly in 1953. The telegram in question has not been found. In another telegram, Eban explained to Eytan that Israel was committed to voting for the People's Republic of China, but there was no point in supporting an issue foredoomed to failure. He emphasized that even countries that had recognized the People's Republic were not prepared to take action on its behalf in the Assembly (telegram X928, 15 September 1953, 130.09/2331/2).
2. Eytan's telegram, referred to here, arrived late. Israel abstained in all votes on this issue. Ultimately the U.S. motion passed and the Soviet resolution was never put to a vote.

374. A. R. Moore to E. Najar. 15 September 1953

Note

1. See No. 362, n. 3.

375. E. Elath to M. Sharett (telegram). 18 September 1953

Notes

1. When Elath asked for a meeting with Salisbury he intended to raise two issues: (1) Israel and the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations; (2) purchasing military surplus from Britain and credit terms.
2. Sharett instructed Elath: (1) to clarify the expected outcome of the Suez negotiations and make sure that Israel would be informed of the state of affairs; (2) to urge Britain to pressure Egypt to stop interfering with maritime passage through the Suez Canal to Israel, including tankers. If an arrangement for the passage of tankers could be reached, Israel was prepared to refrain from making it public; (3) to demand that Britain refrain from supplying arms to the Arabs as long as there is no peace and to

ask Britain to suggest such a policy to the United States, since Dulles was no longer convinced of the wisdom of his own policy on this issue; (4) to emphasize the absurdity of the diplomatic corps' decision to boycott the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem and explain that Israel was not asking them to transfer their embassies. It remained willing to hold meetings in Tel Aviv, but only on condition that the foreign representatives also visit Jerusalem (telegram IL162, 17 September 1953, 130.02/245/1).

3. See No. 166 (Editorial Note) and No. 167.
4. See No. 176.
5. See No. 424, paragraphs (4) and (6).
6. From May 1950. See Vol. 5, No. 248.
7. Sharett met with Eden in February and March 1952. See Vol. 7, Nos. 50 and 68.
8. Cf. the report on the meeting and the preparations for it in two memoranda by Falla, 17 September 1953, and in a letter from Salisbury to Evans, 21 September 1953, PRO, FO371/172605, 102815.

376. W. Eytan to A. Eban. 20 September 1953[1]

Notes

1. In a vote in the General Assembly on 16 September, Eban was elected one of the seven vice-presidents of the Assembly, by a vote of 37–30. The vice-presidents serve ex-officio on the Assembly's General Committee, which helps the Assembly's president determine the agenda and conduct the business of the General Assembly.
2. On 11 May, India announced that 337 of the some 2400 Indian Jews who had emigrated to Israel had returned to India because they had suffered discrimination in Israel on account of the color of their skin.
3. See No. 114.
4. See No. 364 and n. 4 there.

377. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (New York). 21 September 1953

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2330/20

Following up a previous telegram,[1] Rafael instructs Eban to meet with Hammarskjöld and Cordier and emphasize the following: (1) Bennike should be instructed in no uncertain terms not to deviate from the basic position taken by the UN since 18 May 1951.[2] (2) Any change in the UN position would encourage the Syrians to act and might lead to a serious clash. There is no justification for a UN surrender to Syrian threats, because Israel has been careful to uphold the rights of the Arabs of the demilitarized zone in accordance with UN policy. (3) Undercutting Riley's decision means undermining the status of the UN. Referring the matter to

the Security Council, too, would totally undermine the armistice regime. (4) If the matter is brought before the Security Council, Israel will attack the Arabs on all fronts, including Article VIII of the agreement with Jordan, Suez, infiltration, and their refusal to make peace. (5) The assertion that the Benot Yaaqov project gives Israel a military advantage is unfounded. (6) For more than a year now the UN and the Western powers have been ignoring Israel's protests about the Yarmuk project, which is detrimental to Israel. Israel is willing to negotiate a regional water settlement and to resume the talks with Syria on water issues. Agreement has already been reached in these talks to the effect that the Israel is free to utilize the Jordan River waters as long as it supplies water to Buteiha. The Benot Yaaqov project, too, guarantees water to Buteiha. (7) Israel will react vigorously to any Syrian use of force.

Notes

1. Eytan cabled that Bennike had informed Cordier of the following: (1) Syria was not satisfied with the Israeli promise to supply water to Buteiha, since Israel can prevent the flow of water during dry seasons. (2) The Syrians claim that draining the Hula altered the military situation in the area. Bennike did not agree that the drainage gave Israel a military advantage, but he was giving consideration to ordering a cessation of work on the basis of another article of the armistice agreement (21 September 1953, 130.09/2330/20).
2. See the Security Council resolution on the Hula dispute, Vol. 6, Editorial Note, Main Volume, pp. 327–29; Companion Volume, p. 140.
3. See No. 366 and nn. 2–4 there.
4. See No. 365, n. 11.
5. See No. 139 and n. 1 there.
6. On Eban's meeting with Cordier, see his telegram to the Foreign Ministry, 23 September 1953, 130.09/2331/2. Eban had emphasized Bennike's obligation to weigh the positive aspects of the Israeli work on the Benot-Yaaqov canal against Syrian opposition, and repeated his promise concerning the guarantee of water to the inhabitants of Buteiha.

378. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 21 September 1953

Coded Tel. S61; Inc.: 130.09/2310/13

Eban cables the division about his two-hour talk with Byroade, in which the following came to light: (1) The U.S. government has had confidential contacts with the Vatican to ascertain whether it would agree to forgo the idea of territorial internationalization and support a proposal for super-

vision of the Holy Places. If the Americans obtain the Vatican's consent for this idea they will submit it to the General Assembly. Otherwise they will act to keep the matter off the agenda. Eban warned the Americans against committing themselves to the proposal before clarifying the matter with Israel. Byroade was taken aback and explained that the Vatican was offered only a proposal phrased in general terms, to replace the concept of territorial internationalization with an appropriate practical arrangement for the Holy Places. The Vatican demarche is strictly confidential, known to only six people in the State Department. He had disclosed it to Eban because he feared that Israel might unwittingly undermine the State Department's efforts by an initiative of its own at the General Assembly. Eban reassured him and promised not to raise the issue at the General Assembly. Byroade, for his part, offered to report on the Vatican's position to Israel before the United States makes a commitment.

(2) The State Department is alarmed by the conflict between Israel and Syria over the start of work in the Benot-Yaaqov area. By all indications, the State Department received overstated and panicky communications from the ambassador in Damascus and came to the conclusion that Israel and Syria were on the brink of armed hostilities. They are so worried that they decided to delay signing the letter releasing the assistance money. Eban vehemently protested the distortion and inflation of the facts and described the situation as it really is. Byroade was reassured[2] and said he would wait for Bennike's report.

While they were discussing this item, Byroade said that the Secretary of State and the State Department are persevering in their plans for regional water projects. In the next few days they will give the UN secretary-general a report prepared by TVA experts on water problems in the region. In the meantime, they have rejected the Yarmuk Plan.

(3) Byroade expressed hope that within a few days he would be able to inform Eban that the assistance money will be released by the end of Israel's fiscal year. Eban said that on the basis of his previous talks with Byroade and Stassen he had informed his government that it could operate on the assumption of $65 million in assistance. Eban also expressed concern that the sum allocated for the region might be channeled to Iran. Byroade said he was trying to prevent this.

(4) With regard to military assistance, Byroade explained that the U.S. government is aiming to expand its influence in the Arab world in order to advance peace between the Arabs and Israel. The ambassadors in the region are advising that the U.S. improve its standing by means of military assistance. The order of priorities is Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, and Egypt. Eban questioned the plan. Byroade replied that he cannot face Congress if he does not use the appropriation for which he had campaigned so vigorously.[4]

Notes

1. 18 September 1953.
2. Cf. *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, p. 1317.
3. *Sic.* Should read: "TVA" (Tennessee Valley Authority).
4. See Nos. 389 and 391.
5. See the detailed report on the meeting, dispatched by Shiloah to the United States Division, 21 September 1953, 130.20/2460/5.

379. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (New York). 22 September 1953

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2330/20

Rafael cables that a confidential source informed him that Cordier has endorsed Bennike's position that he has the authority to order a halt to work on the Benot-Yaaqov canal under Article V of the Israel-Syria armistice agreement.[1] Cordier suggested that Bennike demand a meeting of the Mixed Armistice Commission should Israel refuse to comply. If this proved unsuccessful, he would be entitled to report to the Security Council.

Upon receipt of this information, Sharett summoned Bennike and Vigier, with Dayan attending, and stressed the following points: (1) During this second stage of work in the demilitarized zone the Syrians are repeating their policy of extortion, which has already led to a bloody clash. Sharett warned of disastrous results to the entire armistice regime should the UN capitulate to the threats. (2) The issue of the rights of Arabs residing in the demilitarized zone, which came up in the Hula Valley, does not exist here. (3) As for the duty of both parties and the UN to safeguard the rights of individuals in the demilitarized zone, Sharett reminded them that the electric company holds a concession that fully entitles it to perform the work. (4) The UN must not be a partner to the double crime of capitulating to a threat of force to terminate a development project and of being associated with Arab machinations to strangle Israel. (5) If the Syrians carry out their threats, Israel will be ready. If the UN intends to submit to the threats, which are based on groundless claims, it will find Israel prepared, and with justification, to use every means to safeguard its rights under the armistice agreement.

Bennike tried to prove that the project gives Israel a military advantage. Sharett rejected this argument. Vigier contended that Israel had promised him it would do nothing to the detriment of Arab land and water rights. Sharett promised to provide him with a written document on the matter.[2]

The assumption in Israel is that Bennike will postpone his decision until the UN Secretariat discusses his report of this meeting. Accordingly, Rafael urges Eban to take urgent action in New York.

Notes

1. Article V of the Israel-Syria armistice agreement specified the arrangements for the demilitarized zone. See No. 381 (appendix).
2. See No. 365, n. 11.
3. See Shalev to Bennike, 22 September 1953, 93.04/41/12.
4. The negotiations were not resumed after the last meeting on 27 May. See No. 234 and n. 5 there.

380. A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram). 22 September 1953

Note

1. Eban reported to the Foreign Ministry on his talk with Hammarskjöld before he sent this telegram. He described to Hammarskjöld the nature of the Benot-Yaaqov Bridge project and Israel's position, emphasizing that the water supply to Buteiha would not be affected. Eban gained the impression that Hammarskjöld was hesitant and that he wanted to prevent a deterioration of the situation (22 September 1953, 130.09/2331/2).

381. V. Bennike to M. Sharett. 23 September 1953

Notes

1. See No. 366, n. 2.
2. See Sharett's reply to the letter in No. 387.
3. See Vol. 3, No. 343.

382. D. Ben-Gurion: Diary Note [Tel Aviv, 23] September 1953

IMDEA

Ben-Gurion writes that Sharett informed him today that he had received the notification from Bennike.[1] Israel's response was discussed at a meeting between Ben-Gurion and Sharett, Rafael, Tekoah, Dayan, and Makleff. Tekoah said there was no legal basis for prohibiting the work. Sharett and Rafael recommended that work be halted, so that Israel not violate UN resolutions, and that an appeal against Bennike's decision be lodged with the Security Council. Ben-Gurion, relying on Tekoah's remarks, held that work should not be interrupted. The matter is vital for Israel, and suspend-

ing work now would leave Syria in control of the Jordan River. Ben-Gurion feared that if Israel stopped work the Security Council would be unlikely to let it be resumed. Bennike lacks the authority to make such a decision and Israel does not have to heed him. Ben-Gurion assumed that if the Security Council discusses the issue while work is in progress it will find it difficult to halt it; and in any case the matter will take time. Ben-Gurion made it clear that should the Syrians open fire, Israel would respond in kind.

Ben-Gurion writes that Sharett accepted his view, but returned with Rafael about an hour later, raising "new objections." Ben-Gurion suggested to Sharett that the Government be called into session if he is uncertain about the decision to continue work. Sharett said he was not inclined to convene the Government and for now and would not order that work on the project be halted.

Notes

1. See No. 381 and the appendix there.
2. The reference is to Riley's decision of March 1951. See Vol. 6, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, pp. 80–81. See also No. 387, paragraph 4.

383. E. Elath (London) to M. Sharett. 23 September 1953

Coded Tel. 205; Inc.: 130.09/2319/5

Further to a previous telegram,[1] Elath presents his assessments of the unofficial talks in Cairo between Great Britain and Egypt. His opinion is that an Anglo-Egyptian agreement should be regarded as a potential fact that both sides regard as a necessity. For Egypt, the agreement is bound up with vital domestic issues; for Britain it involves its relations with the United States and the Muslim-Arab world. Elath assumes that Churchill, who opposes concessions of principle to Egypt and nevertheless acknowledges the need to reach terms with it, prefers that such an agreement be reached while his personal authority can move Naguib to greater concessions than those that could be obtained by Eden or whoever replaces him at 10 Downing Street. He also wishes to extricate British foreign policy from the shackles of parochial concerns so that it can concentrate on the international functions he regards as important.

From the foregoing, Elath concludes as follows: (1) Israel has time to plan the steps it should take to safeguard those of its interests affected by the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations. (2) Notwithstanding Churchill's letter of 22 April,[2] the British government is unwilling to undertake to defend and

guarantee Israel's rights in the Canal. (3) After an agreement has been reached on the Canal, the United States will presumably move to achieve a settlement between Israel and its neighbors. Elath believes that the new American administration will press Israel harder than its predecessor did to reach a settlement. (4) Should the Anglo-Egyptian accord include, in one fashion or another, the Arab collective security pact, the Arab states and the Arab League would be strengthened. In that case, Turkey and France would have cause for concern, since neither takes a favorable view of an increase in the political or military strength of Arab countries. (5) Israel's foreign policy should regard an Anglo-Egyptian accord, in and of itself, as the beginning of a new period of development in the economic, military, and political might of Egypt and the Arab world as a whole. Both the United States and Egypt will tend to encourage such developments. This may be detrimental to Israel, which must be prepared for such a contingency.

Elath continues: (1) Israel cannot try to thwart the agreement on the grounds that it would be detrimental to Israel's status. An attempt to do so would be construed as an Israeli aspiration to benefit from regional instability and to disrupt relations between the Arab states and the West. Israel should, however, act to safeguard its interests in the Canal. Elath proposes submitting a new note to the British government, with copies to the governments of the United States, France, and Turkey. The note should again raise the problems mentioned in the note of 14 April,[3] with special emphasis on the stoppage of Israeli shipping in the Canal and the meaning of "reactivation." (2) A comprehensive information campaign should be conducted in circles that can be mobilized to help, especially in London and Washington but also in Paris and Ankara. Friendly politicians and editors should be enlisted to take appropriate action. (3) Elath suggests sending through the canal an Israeli vessel bearing a cargo permitted by the armistice agreement, thereby forcing the Egyptians to show their hand. If this ship is impounded, the issue should be brought to the Security Council. (4) Fischer and Divon should bring up the full scope of the affair in talks with the foreign ministries in Ankara and Paris. (5) Elath admits that even if his proposals succeed they will be inadequate to prevent the strengthening of Egypt and the Arab countries that will result from an Anglo-Egyptian accord. Nevertheless he proposes examining the extent to which an Israeli setback in one area may be justified by an achievement in other areas that are vital to Israel.

Notes

1. See File 130.09/2319/5.
2. See No. 176.

3. See No. 424 and paragraphs 4 and 6 there.
4. See No. 166 (Editorial Note) and No. 167.
5. For further correspondence on this subject, see No. 412.

384. G. Rafael to A. Eban (telegram). 23 September 1953

Note

1. Rafael asked Eban to clarify whether 'Azmi had brought back a reply about the meeting with Riad (20 September 1953, 130.15/3772/66). See No. 362 and n. 4 there. For Eban's reply, see No. 410.

385. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (New York). 23 September 1953

Copy: 130.02/2443/10

Herzog informs Eban of the strategy adopted at a consultation with the Foreign Minister concerning Shaltiel's telegram,[1] and in view of Eban's telegram of 21 September[2] concerning the secret American contacts with the Vatican.

(1) It was decided that since the government of Brazil has not yet approached Israel and offered its services as an intermediary, there is no reason for an official response by Shaltiel. He should even refrain from responding unofficially, in view of certain doubts concerning Fabrino's activity.

(2) Eban should contact Pimentel Brandão and attempt to get more information on the initiative. If he repeats the proposal, Eban can tell him that Israel has never rejected the idea of an accord with the Vatican. If he goes into details of the proposal, he should be apprised of its flaws.

Herzog adds that other proposals were also discussed at the consultation. One of these was that Israel try to initiate direct talks with the Vatican, not necessarily as a result of the rumored alteration in the Vatican's policy on Jerusalem. One of the participants considered such an attempt justified in view of the changed attitude of Vatican envoys towards Israeli representatives in several Latin American countries after the severance of relations with the Soviet Union. A second proposal was that Israel should ask Brazil to try to establish direct communications between Israel and the Vatican for an exchange of views on Jerusalem. Neither proposal was adopted. The argument against the first was that the Vatican had already been given an opportunity to establish contacts with Israel six weeks ago and has not yet responded. A consideration weighing against both proposals was that

direct contacts with the Vatican at this time would be construed by world opinion as meaning that a solution to the problem depends on the Vatican. This might undermine the entire structure of Israeli contacts on the Jerusalem issue with peripheral Catholic countries, Israel's collaboration with international Protestant organizations and with the Eastern denominations in Jerusalem, and its agreement in principle with Jordan.

Herzog added that there have been hints from various sources about a possible change in the Vatican's position. This does not mean it is prepared to abandon the principle of territorial internationalization but rather that it is closer to accepting a practical solution that would not explicitly infringe on the concept of internationalization.

Herzog explains that the Ministry is uncertain whether this is simply a ruse or whether the Vatican has decided to try to salvage whatever can be salvaged in the existing circumstances. It is difficult to conceive a fundamental turnaround in the Vatican's objectives, that is, that the Holy See will forgo its traditional policy and announce this publicly before it is confident it will have some foothold in Jerusalem.

The Ministry is waiting for further reports that will clarify the situation.[4]

Notes

1. The reference is to a telegram to the Foreign Ministry from the Israel minister in Brazil, David Shaltiel, about his meeting with the head of the Brazilian delegation to the UN, Pimentel Brandão. Brandão told him of contacts between the Brazilian minister to Israel, Fabrino, and the Vatican Secretary of State, Tardini, on possible Brazilian mediation of the Jerusalem issue. In quest of a compromise, the two raised the idea of continued demilitarization around Jerusalem, within a radius of 25 kilometers, and the creation of small enclaves of Holy Places under Vatican custodianship. Fabrino proposed convening a conference of Christian nations, apparently with the participation of Israel and Jordan, to sign a convention on this matter.

   When Shaltiel met with Fabrino, the latter confirmed the report, claiming that his proposal was intended to ensure Israel's sovereignty over Jerusalem and the establishment of peace between Israel and Jordan. Shaltiel believed that Brazil would agree to mediate the Jerusalem problem. He asked whether the Foreign Ministry was interested in such mediation by Brazil, and, if not, whether he should take steps to prevent possible talks between the Brazilian government and the Vatican (15 September 1953, 130.02/2443/10).
2. See No. 378.
3. In File 93.03/3062/5.
4. See No. 466.

386. Ch. Herzog [Washington] to the United States Division. 23 September 1953

Copy: 93.08/361/8

Herzog reports on a conversation with Col. Sievers of the Military Assistance Office of the U.S. Department of Defense. Sievers was sent to the Middle East to look into ways to use the $30 million appropriated for military assistance to the region. In Cairo he participated in a meeting of American ambassadors; he also visited Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Israel. In Israel he met unofficially with the Chief of the General Staff and the commander of the Air Force. He said that U.S. aid to the Middle East is meant to achieve political objectives more than military ones. The intention is to encourage the countries of the region to align themselves more closely with the West, especially with the United States. The idea is to provide assistance on the basis of bilateral agreements without mentioning any linkage to regional accords, though the ultimate goal is a regional settlement. What makes these accords difficult is the absence of peace with Israel.

The Pentagon opposes any delay and is pressing the State Department for a prompt decision as to which countries are eligible for assistance.

Sievers told Herzog that the Administration's proposed $100 million aid package was cut to $30 million because of the absence of detailed plans. There is some flexibility in the law, so it is possible to increase the aid, for example by transferring ten percent of the appropriation for Greece and Turkey or by transferring from other budget lines.

Herzog sums up: (1) The first practical step towards implementing military assistance has begun. (2) The U.S. government is not bound by the figure of $30 million. (3) The factors accelerating implementation of the assistance are Defense Department pressure and fear of Congress. (4) The odds are good that the money will be credited to Israel before the end of the fiscal year. (5) The Americans are considering the establishment of factories, at least in connection with Israel. (6) The assistance will be provided on the basis of a bilateral agreement.

Notes

1. See No. 339 and n. 1 there.
2. See No. 320.

387. M. Sharett to V. Bennike. 24 September 1953

Notes

1. See No. 381 and appendix there.
2. See Vol. 3, No. 342.
3. In File 93.04/41/12.
4. No. 379.
5. Bennike gave a provisional reply on 26 September 1953 (130.02/2434/4) and a definitive reply on 20 October (see No. 458). In the first letter, he quoted paragraph 9 of Sharett's letter and stated that during his recent visit to Syria he had heard no threats to undertake military action against Israel; nor would threats affect his decision. He again urged the Government of Israel to order a suspension of the work so as to facilitate clarification of controversial points, and, if necessary, an inquiry into the matter by the Security Council. Sharett interpreted the letter as representing a retreat of sorts in Bennike's stand. In reply, he asked for a meeting with him. The two met on 28 September. See No. 397.

388. Meeting: W. Eytan–F. H. Russell. 24 September 1953

Notes

1. See Nos. 367 and 368, and n. 4 there.
2. See No. 291.

389. A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram). 24 September 1953

Notes

1. See Nos. 381 and 387.
2. See No. 391.

390. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (New York). 25 September 1953

Coded Tel.: 394; Outg.: 130.09/2330/20

Sharett analyzes Bennike's note.[1]

(A) The note is exceedingly grave. (1) It expresses opposition to the very existence of the project, whereas previously there had only been concern about the rights of individuals. (2) It calls for an unlimited suspension of

work. (3) It links resumption of work to an agreement.

(B) The note leaves a narrow opening for compromise, since it does not set a deadline for halting work and is therefore not an ultimatum. Nor does it state explicitly that the agreement referred to must be with Syria, although this is implied by the context.

(C) More serious still is that the decision was immediately communicated to Syria. When Sharett tried to meet with Bennike for further clarifications, the latter refused, on the pretext that his decision had already been conveyed to Syria.

(D) In these circumstances, there was no choice but to reply in the negative.

(E) Sharett's reply was not phrased as an explicit refusal to stop work. It stated that Israel does not consider Bennike's demand to be justified and rejects the assumption that the development project should be contingent on an agreement, except for one with landowners, who, in this case, do not exist. Sharett agreed to check the status of the land in the official title registry.

(F) The situation would be altogether different had Bennike requested a moratorium for a limited period.

(G) Bennike can still beat a dignified retreat if he states the following in his reply: (1) He did not mean to question the project itself. (2) He had intended work to be frozen for a few days in order to check the facts. (3) "Agreement" means an agreement with him, not with Syria.

(H) Sharett recommends that every effort be made to persuade Bennike to use these clarifications to extricate himself from his corner.

(I) If Bennike does not do so, the only option left will for Israel to ask Security Council for a decision similar to that on the Hula, namely, no challenge to the project, no endorsement of Syria's position on the matter, and safeguarding of individual rights.

(J) The State Department should be warned against any rash idea such as applying economic pressure on Israel.

Notes

1. See No. 381.
2. See No. 387.
3. On this issue, see No. 389.

391. A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram). 26 September 1953

Notes

1. The meeting took place on 25 September. See the report by A. Eban,

130.02/2414/27; compare *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1320–25.

2. See No. 381 (appendix).
3. See No. 389.
4. See No. 387.
5. See Nos. 401 and 402.

392. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 26 September 1953

Coded Tel. W575; Inc.: 130.09/2310/3

Eban expresses puzzlement and irritation with his colleagues in Jerusalem who did not brief him on tactics for the serious campaign Israel can expect in Washington and at the UN. The Jordan River project has greatly increased the burden and there is a risk of a general collapse. Eban lists the following items that are on the agenda: (1) Jerusalem; (2) the refugees; (3) efforts to deter the supply of arms to the Arabs; (4) appeals to centers of political power in the United States aimed at countering the Administration's attitude towards Israel; (5) the campaign against discrimination against Israel in the distribution of foreign aid; (6) the Jerusalem Conference and resumption of public and financial efforts by American Jewry.

In Eban's opinion, the rekindling of the Jordan River Project controversy at this juncture cruelly extends the diplomatic efforts of the Embassy staff in various arenas. He believes that the decision to begin the project in the north failed to take account of the political complications facing Israel and the diplomatic workload in Washington. He blames himself for not having warned Jerusalem in advance, but insists that Israeli foreign policy should not try to solve all major issues at one go. The need to shorten the front should be considered seriously.

Eban enumerates the following possible lines of action: (1) Continue work on the project, disregarding Bennike and the UN, and without bringing the matter to the Security Council. This course of action would lead to a head-on collision with the Security Council and the Western powers and end in a disgraceful surrender by Israel. (2) Continue work and challenge Bennike's decree at the Security Council. This course of action is somewhat better, but may lose the sympathy of those who are willing to listen to Israel's case. (3) Stop work while refusing to budge from Israel's position and rejecting the premises of those who ordered the work halted. Concurrently, an effort should be made to reach a settlement, as was done with the Hula project. His colleagues in Washington believe this to be the best course.

Eban asks how he should act to counter the State Department's cynical use of the assistance funds. Should he protest openly or reach a quiet accord and reveal Israel's resentment only later? Eban also asks whether there

is any assurance that the Jordan project imbroglio will not cause old problems—such as Jerusalem—to resurface. He ends his telegram by expressing a feeling that Israel's foreign policy lacks clearly defined guidelines.[3]

Notes

1. See Nos. 389 and 391.
2. See No. 431, n. 4.
3. See No. 387.
4. For Sharett's reply, see No. 398.

393. M. Sharett to the Israel Delegation to the United Nations (telegram). 27 September 1953

Notes

1. See No. 390.
2. See No. 391.
3. Sharett had a similar talk that same day with the British ambassador. For a report on the latter, see Sharett's telegram to Elath, 29 September 1953, 93.04/41/12, and compare Evans' report in a telegram to the Foreign Office, 27 September 1953, and in two letters to Falla, 29 September 1953, PRO, FO371/104773.

394. Editorial Note

Government Decision on the Dispute with Gen. Bennike concerning Work to Divert the Jordan River, 27 September 1953

On 27 September, during the Sukkot festival, the Government convened in extraordinary session, with the participation of IDF representatives, to discuss the question of work near the Benot-Yaaqov Bridge. Sharett reported on several items: the correspondence with Bennike and its implications (see Nos. 381, 387, and 389); the tension in Washington and the activities of the ambassador and Embassy staff there, reading out, in this context, Eban's telegrams (Nos. 389 and 391); and his meetings with the French, American and British ambassadors (see No. 393 and n. 2 there, and No. 395). He proposed trying to persuade Bennike not to take a stand against the project but to agree to a suspension of work for a specified period, while he clarified with Israel the status of the landowners in the area. After deliberating the matter, the Government decided to authorize the Foreign Minister to

pursue the line he had adopted in his letter to the UNTSO Chief of Staff (see No. 387).

395. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Paris. 28 September 1953

Coded Tel.: L935; Outg.: 130.09/2345/3

Sharett reports to Divon that Gilbert, at a diplomatic reception, warned him to be wary of the Americans in relation to the Benot-Yaaqov canal affair. He said they are lying in ambush to "get" Israel. Sharett suggested trying to persuade Vigier to accept the Israeli attitude that Bennike set a time limit to the construction moratorium and explain the suspension as motivated by a need to explore the matter. Sharett believes that his talk with Gilbert influenced Bennike's retreat in his note of 27 September.[1]

Note

1. See No. 387, n. 5.

396. E. Elath (London) to W. Eytan. 28 September 1953

Coded Tel.: L972; Inc.: 130.09/2319/5

Elath reports on Gazit's talk with Simpson, the head of the Middle East secretariat in the British Foreign Office, and with Pullar, head of Israel affairs. Gazit supplied them with details about the work on the Jordan River. The British alleged that Israel is disregarding the fact that it is initiating a project that would divert the Jordan to outside the demilitarized zone. Israel's unilateral action has panicked Syria and will harm the prospects of reaching a settlement. Simpson said he is sure that had Israel attempted to persuade Jordan and Syria they would have agreed to the plan. Be this as it may, Israel has placed itself in the dock by refusing to heed Bennike's order. The British are not persuaded by the Israeli claim that Bennike derives his authority from both parties and has consequently exceeded his competence. They proposed that Israel ask the contractors to move their crews outside the demilitarized zone until Bennike has had a chance to look into the matter. For their part, they are obliged to support Bennike as the UN representative in the area.

Notes

1. The reference is to the telegram that appears as No. 379 above, whose contents Eytan cabled to London.
2. See No. 370, n. 3.

397. G. Rafael to the Israel Delegation to the United Nations (telegram). 28 September 1953

Notes

1. See No. 381.
2. See Vol. 6, Editorial Notes, Companion Volume, pp. 80–81; Main Volume, pp. 327–29.
3. In another telegram (Y407, 28 September 1953, 130.09/2330/20), Sharett informed Eban that during his meeting with Bennike he had proposed that they hold a *tête-à-tête* to escape the stenographers and advisors from both sides. Bennike rejected the proposal, though he admitted that in a private conversation he would have told Sharett that he wished with all his heart for the work to continue, provided the Syrians agreed. Sharett replied that his wish was impossible, because the Syrians would never give their consent. He recommended that Bennike not even raise this proposal (see the minutes of the meeting, 28 September 1953, 93.03/3008/6).

   Despite what Bennike said, the two did have a private lunch on 29 September. See No. 398 and No. 406, paragraph 3. On the next official meeting, see No. 429.
4. On Eban's meeting with Cordier, see No. 423; on his off-the-record meeting with Hammarskjöld, see Eban to Sharett, telegram X974, 29 September 1953, 130.09/2331/2.

398. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban. 29 September 1953

Orig.: 93.08/349/18

Sharett replies to Eban's telegram,[1] whose contents pained him because of the state of mind they reflect. Sharett writes that he has always been concerned about Eban's excessive workload and agrees that the number of issues and tasks demanding his attention has now reached a peak rarely matched in the past.

Sharett admits that, in each individual matter, policy makers must consider whether the timing is propitious. The question is whether the timing was wrong on this occasion. In any case, though, one cannot always be blessed with perfect foresight and prevent the confluence of undesirable circumstances.

Sharett explains that the accumulation of issues mentioned in Eban's let-

ter was unforeseeable. In any event, Eban himself, who visited Israel in early September, knew about the start of work at Benot-Yaaqov and did not question it to Sharett. As for approval of the date for beginning work, Sharett explains that from the outset he had questioned the advisability of its proximity to the convening of the General Assembly, but was told by the planners that a postponement until mid-autumn would mean delaying the entire project until next spring. Sharett believes there is no way of knowing what the political constellation will be then. From past experience he has learned that any delay results in lost opportunities and redounds to the detriment of the Zionist enterprise.

The Minister of Agriculture also rejected, for financial reasons, Sharett's proposal to begin outside the demilitarized zone, deferring work in the zone to the final stage. That being the case, Sharett insisted that work get under way sooner, so as to not give the impression that Israel was trying to pull a fast one on the General Assembly

Sharett explains that he was fully cognizant of the state of affairs when he approved the start of work and was aware that Israel would face complications.

Reaction was slow in coming, because initially Bennike did not question the matter and Israel was able to get along with the UN observers on the scene. Some time later, however, came Bennike's letter, with all that it implies.

Sharett reiterates that, although he fully understands all the considerations presented by Eban in his telegram, it is impossible to postpone vital projects until the time is more propitious. By no means should Israel be deterred by complications and obstacles; rather, it must try to overcome them.

Sharett goes on to explain to Eban what lay behind his decision to reject Bennike's demand to halt work. The decision was made in consultation with the Prime Minister and is based on the hypothesis that to comply with Bennike's demand would mean placing Israel's fate in Syrian hands; hence at the present stage there is no alternative to a confrontation with the UN.

Sharett rejects Eban's contention that he had not been briefed adequately and demonstrates that when he was in Israel he had been fully informed; later, after his returning to the U.S., he had been kept up do date on the matter. Consequently Sharett rejects Eban's claim that the whole affair had been characterized by a failure to anticipate the possibility of a flare-up.

Finally, Sharett presents the various considerations that will guide Israel in this matter. He stresses that Israel has not yet disobeyed an explicit order to stop the work because Bennike's letter did not set a deadline for doing so. From the legal perspective, Israel is currently studying the legal basis and purpose of Bennike's demand. If Israel manages to persuade him to accept its view, it may clear the way to a settlement based on a limited

moratorium and abandonment of the assumption that Syrian consent is needed for implementation of the project. As for the facts of the matter, there is no justification for stopping the project, because Israel is not creating new facts with regard to water rights; furthermore, it has been proven to Bennike that only four parcels of land are Arab-owned and these will not be affected. Nevertheless, Israel will agree to compromise on a moratorium in order to help Bennike save face, but only if the moratorium is limited in time and given a pertinent rationale in the context of the relations between Israel and the head of the UN observers, not as part of its relations with Syria.

Another possibility put forward by Sharett is a proposal by Rafael to ask the UN secretary-general to act under Article VIII of the Armistice Accord—that is, to convene a conference to review the agreement on the demilitarized zone. Syria will have to respond to this initiative. Even if it predicates its consent on a work stoppage, Israel will be able to justify the concession by arguing that Syria's response to the UN secretary-general is tantamount to accepting Israel's interpretation of the purpose of the armistice accord—to lead to lasting peace.

Sharett rejects the idea that Israel should avail itself of the present favorable climate in the State Department concerning a comprehensive settlement of the issue of water sources and try to settle the Benot-Yaaqov canal conflict in this context. The goal should be to resolve the dispute within the framework of the armistice accords. He fears that widening the scope of the proposed settlement would lead to a combined discussion of the Jordan and Yarmuk Rivers. Ultimately Israel would not reach agreement with Syria but would have acknowledged, albeit indirectly, Syria's right to hold up the project.

Notes

1. See No. 392.
2. See No. 397, n. 3.

399. *Aide-Mémoire* from the United States Embassy in Israel. 29 September 1953

Note

1. See No. 130, n. 2.

400. A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram). 29 September 1953

Notes

1. See No. 397.
2. In the original, two words are missing here.

401. A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram). 30 September 1953

Notes

1. See No. 397, n. 3.
2. The reference is to the complaint the Egyptians submitted on 27 September to the chairman of the Israel-Egypt Mixed Armistice Commission concerning Israel's activities in the demilitarized zone at 'Auja, the pitching of tents that day by armed Israelis in the village of 'Auja, and Israel's notification to Egypt that the demilitarized zone was an integral part of Israeli territory. (See the text of the complaint in the summary on the demilitarized zone by A. Shalev, 9 February 1954, 130.16/2951/8.)

   The 'Auja demilitarized zone had been populated by Bedouin who, Israel alleged, had infiltrated from Egypt, were subject Egyptian influence, and engaged in smuggling. Israeli security circles had for some time feared that Israel would lose control of the zone. Hence in late August 1953 it was decided to change the situation in the zone. On 1 September the outpost of Giv'at Ruth was established outside the demilitarized zone and activity was intensified in the 'Auja region by the introduction of agriculture and eviction of the Bedouin. At the end of the month, the outpost of Giv'at Rahel (Qeziot) was established inside the demilitarized zone. Following this, the Egyptians submitted their protest and requested an urgent meeting of the Mixed Armistice Commission. At the same time, they launched a diplomatic and media onslaught against Israeli activity in the zone. On 29 September they issued a press communiqué that accused Israel of sending forces into the demilitarized zone, seizing territory there, and erecting fortifications. On the same day, the Egyptian foreign minister informed the British representative of the establishment of 16 small outposts in the demilitarized zone and the introduction of military forces. The IDF spokesman rejected the Egyptian communiqué; an official denial was sent also to the chairman of the Mixed Armistice Commission. Israel claimed that the settlement established was agricultural and civilian in nature (ibid.). On the repercussions of the affair, see No. 406, n. 5, and No. 409.
3. See No. 406, paragraph 6.
4. See No. 387.
5. See Sharett's response in No. 406.

402. A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram). 30 September 1953

Notes

1. See No. 413.

2. See No. 474 and n. 1 there.
3. See Nos. 397 and 398.
4. For Sharett's reply, see No. 406.

403. Sh. Divon (Paris) to the Western Europe Division. 30 September 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2345/2

(1) De Courcelle and Mayer told Divon that, on the basis of information available to them, it is premature to speak of a conclusion of the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations in Cairo. They said that the French understand Israel's concern about ensuring passage through the Suez Canal and will try to thwart any development that would lead to implementation of the collective security pact.

(2) In accordance with Sharett's guidelines, Divon spoke with them about the Hula issue.[1] They feel it would be difficult, in the current situation, to modify Bennike's position. They believe the solution is to continue negotiating with the Syrians on partition of the demilitarized zone.

Note

1. The reference is apparently to No. 379, whose contents were sent also to Paris and London. (See Eytan's telegram, 23 September 1953, 130.09/2345/3.)

404. E. Elath to M. Sharett and L. Eshkol (telegram). 30 September 1953

Notes

1. The reference is to the decision by the British oil companies to stop selling Israel petroleum from Kuwait. See also Nos. 423 and 527.
2. The reference is to the ratification of the reparations agreement, despite the campaign waged against it by the Arab countries. See No. 13, n. 2.
3. On the consultation in the Foreign Ministry, see No. 423. For the letter submitted to the British Foreign Office, see No. 527.

405. E. Sasson (Rome) to M. Sharett. 30 September 1953

Coded Tel. MPR775; Inc.: 130.09/2356/4

Sasson reacts to Elath's telegram on the results of the Anglo-Egyptian

talks.[1] (1) He believes that the recent jailing of former Egyptian leaders and the Revolutionary Command Council's decision to prosecute them are meant to terrorize the public and stifle criticism in anticipation of a Suez Canal agreement with Great Britain that will not meet all the extreme Egyptian demands. (2) Sasson fears that Elath's proposal to send a ship through the canal will be construed as a provocation and as undermining British and American efforts to achieve stability in the Middle East. (3) Sasson assumes that the second phase, after the Anglo-Egyptian accord is signed, will be Arab rearmament, activation of the Arab collective security pact, and its linkage to other Western defense alliances. They may also forge a new alliance embracing the Arab world—Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan. There may even be a direct agreement between the Arab League and the United States. (4) Sasson believes it unlikely that Turkey will object to an Anglo-Egyptian accord if it is assured that Western forces will be able to seize the Canal in time of emergency. As a country that borders the U.S.S.R., Turkey sees itself as the first target of an attack and has a greater interest than other Western countries in fortifying and strengthening its Arab and Muslim neighbors. (5) It should be presumed that, in the aftermath of an Anglo-Egyptian accord, the way will be cleared for an agreement on Middle East defense. In that case, even France will not oppose the accord or activation of the Arab collective security pact at some future date, especially if the latter is linked to the West, including France. (6) During a visit to Rome, the prime minister and foreign minister of Greece reached agreement with the heads of the Italian government to coordinate their actions whenever the problem of Middle East defense comes up.

Note

1. See No. 383.

406. M. Sharett to A. Eban (telegram). 1 October 1953

Notes

1. See Nos. 401 and 402.
2. See No. 397 and n. 3 there.
3. See No. 413.
4. See No. 401, n. 2.
5. The Mixed Armistice Commission convened on 2 October and rejected the Egyptian motion that the establishment of settlements in the demilitarized zone constituted a violation of the armistice agreement. However, it was decided that the entry of an armed Israeli unit into the demilitarized zone and its assault on the Bedouins there,

as well as the presence of armed Israeli military or police personnel in the outpost, did constitute a serious violation of the agreement. Israel appealed this decision to the Special Commission (see A. Shalev to Bennike, 3 October 1953, 130.16/2951/8; see also No. 409 and n. 3 there).

6. See No. 369, n. 9.
7. On this subject, see No. 424, paragraphs 4 and 6.

407. E. Elath (London) to M. Sharett. 2 October 1953

Coded Tel. L990; Outg.: 93.04/41/12

Replying to Sharett's telegram,[1] Elath reports on Gazit's talk with Falla, head of the Levant Department in the Foreign Office. Falla told Gazit that the decision against a visit by Evans to Jerusalem originated with Salisbury, the acting foreign secretary. At their most recent meeting,[2] he was supposed to inform him that his government had decided not to transfer the British Embassy to Jerusalem nor to frequent the Foreign Ministry on a regular basis until a decision has been taken on the status of the city. They fear that such visits might be construed as recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Evans' remarks about his having been authorized to come to Jerusalem referred to emergencies. Falla denied that the Foreign Office reply to Evans, forbidding him to go to Jerusalem, was a tactical maneuver meant to avoid visiting the city during the conflict with Syria.

Falla added that the British stance on the demilitarized zone was set as early as 18 May 1951 and has not been modified since. Their statements to the Syrians do not imply any recognition of Syrian rights in the demilitarized zone, just as they do not recognize Israel's sovereignty there. If Israel wishes to redefine the status of the demilitarized zone, it can act pursuant to the procedure set forth in the armistice agreement and convene a bilateral conference. Falla had heard nothing about tension agitation and activity in Damascus.[4]

Notes

1. Sharett reported on the note he had received from Evans on 30 September, to the effect that the Foreign Office would not authorize their meeting in Jerusalem. Sharett had invited Evans to Jerusalem to discuss the Anglo-Egyptian talks and the British notification to the Syrians that London had asked Israel to abide by Bennike's instructions. The invitation had been extended after Evans told him, at their previous meeting, that he was not absolutely barred from coming to Jerusalem but required prior authorization by the Foreign Office to do so; to obtain this he must provide advance notification of the topics of conversation. Sharett was angered by

the rejection of the invitation and wrote that he would not meet Evans again until the boycott of Jerusalem had been lifted.

Sharett also instructed Elath to request the Foreign Office to inform Syria in no uncertain terms that Britain's position—that Israel must comply with Bennike's instructions—did not necessarily imply recognition of Syria's status in the demilitarized zone (telegram IL67, 30 September 1953, 93.04/39/19; see also Sharett's telegrams to Elath, IL165, 29 September 1953, and IL166, 30 September 1953, ibid.).

2. See No. 375, paragraph 3.
3. The reference is to the Security Council resolution. See Vol. 6, Editorial Note, Main Volume, pp. 327–29, Companion Volume, p. 140.
4. See No. 397.
5. Compare Falla's report on the meeting in the document entitled "Israel-Syrian Frontier Dispute," 1 October 1953, PRO, FO371/104773.

408. E. Sasson (Rome) to W. Eytan. 2 October 1953

Coded Tel. MPR780; Inc.: 130.09/2356/4

Sasson reports on a diplomatic reception in honor of the new Italian minister to Israel. Among those attending were senior officials in the Italian Foreign Ministry. At the end of the reception, del Balzo di Presenzano and Giustiniani officially informed him that the Foreign Ministry cannot accede to Israel's request to have the new envoy present his credentials in Jerusalem. They explained that Italy, a Catholic country, cannot be the first to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Nor can it be the first to breach a joint commitment, undertaken with several other countries, concerning their policy on Jerusalem. They asked Israel to show an understanding of this position. They added that were Israel willing to forgo the submission of the new minister's credentials to the President in Jerusalem, they would be willing to instruct him to visit the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem immediately upon his arrival and to present his credentials to the Foreign Minister there. They would also instruct him to visit Jerusalem frequently. They stated that should Israel not agree to this arrangement they would have to indefinitely postpone the arrival in Israel of the new minister and make due, until the Jerusalem issue is resolved, with the services of the chargé d'affaires in the Italian legation in Tel Aviv.

Del Balzo di Presenzano added that Israel can rest assured that the Italians totally disregarded the Arab factor in considering the issue. The very fact that they are conducting talks with Israel on a trade agreement proves that they do not treat this factor as very important when issues of substance are at stake.

The fact that the envoys of the Netherlands and of Chile presented their credentials in Jerusalem cannot be used as an argument to influence public opinion in Italy, the Vatican, and the Christian world, particularly among

Catholics. After all, the Netherlands is a Protestant country that located its legation in Jerusalem from the outset, while Chile is a small country whose minister does not reside permanently in Israel. Even should the Russian minister decide to present his credentials in Jerusalem, it would not affect the Italian stance. Del Balzo di Presenzano expressed his regret that the Italian Foreign Ministry had not sent the new envoy before the Ministry relocated.

Sasson tried to persuade his interlocutors to reconsider their unyielding position, but to no avail. In the end they asked for a respite of several months.

Notes

1. See No. 556, n. 3.
2. The Italian minister to Israel, Benedetto Capomazza di Campolattaro, presented his credentials to President Ben-Zvi at the Galei Kinneret Hotel in Tiberias on 16 December 1953. On 7 December he submitted a copy of his credentials to Foreign Minister Sharett in Jerusalem.

409. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 5 October 1953

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2319/14

Eytan cables that the storm that Egypt is stirring up over the 'Auja affair,[1] with the help of the Arab countries, is the result of a deliberate prior decision by the Arab League to intensify hostile action against Israel. Ever since the Foreign Ministry moved to Jerusalem there has been a flood of false reports concerning Israel's ostensible aggressive intentions. Egypt has become the vanguard of this propaganda campaign, as an Anglo-Egyptian accord draws near. It may be that Egypt wishes to enlist Arab extremism in its service at the decisive stage of the negotiations by whipping up anti-Israel passions and to prepare an excuse for aggressive use of its enhanced strength after the negotiations are concluded. Hence moderation should be demanded of Egypt, not Israel, along with absolute guarantees against misuse of the political and military might that Egypt will acquire after the agreement.

On the 'Auja issue, Eytan reports that Israel has appealed to the Special Committee against the decision of the Mixed Armistice Commission concerning the presence of Israeli armed forces in the demilitarized zone.[2] Two thousand Bedouin who lived in the area used to infiltrate into Israel. The Egyptian complaint against the establishment of a settlement there

was not upheld by the Mixed Armistice Commission. The last decision is an important achievement for Israel in fulfillment of its intention to settle Jews in the demilitarized zone. There is no reason for outside intervention as long as the affair is *sub judice* before the Special Committee.

The assertion that the area is no-man's land must be rejected. It should be emphasized that the area in question is Israeli territory, subject only to the restrictions of demilitarization.

Notes

1. See No. 401, n. 2.
2. See No. 406 and n. 5 there.
3. The appeal was not heard by the Special Committee until 25 October 1954. It focused on the interpretation of the term "armed forces," which were forbidden to enter the demilitarized zone by Article VIII of the armistice agreement. Israel interpreted this as meaning regular military forces, not a group of armed men operating as a unit, as the Egyptians claimed. (See the report on the meeting of the Special Committee, 24 October 1954, signed by A. Shalev, 130.02/2439/8.)

410. A. Eban (New York) to G. Rafael. 6 October 1953

Coded Tel. 995; Inc.: 130.02/2331/2

Eban reports on a meeting with 'Azmi; Najar was also present. 'Azmi told him as follows: (1) It should not be assumed that an agreement with Great Britain is near, although the odds are improving every day. (2) There is no basis to the assumption that an accord with Britain will be followed immediately by an effort to reach agreement with Israel. At most Egypt will be prepared for a period of mutual avoidance of hostile military and diplomatic action as a prelude to a positive change of direction. The Americans are deceiving themselves by spreading the absurd idea that Naguib is ready for a peace agreement with Israel. (3) The West is not including the issue of free passage in the negotiations over the Suez Canal, but there are hints that this will have to be discussed as soon as an agreement on evacuation of the Canal Zone is reached and before it is implemented. (4) The influence of German experts is on the rise, but this should not be construed as official influence. Any idea of German mediation is baseless; there is no willingness in the Egyptian government to relate seriously to this idea. (5) Although the Naguib regime is not yet willing to consider peace, there is no doubt that when it reaches such a conclusion it will insist on a direct accord without outside (chiefly American) intervention. After an accord with Britain, the Egyptian sensitivity to foreign intervention may well be

transferred from Britain to the United States. In any case, according to 'Azmi, Israel should not portray peace as dependent on outside intervention. (6) 'Azmi reported to Fawzi after his talks with Rafael in Geneva.[2] Fawzi authorized him to maintain contact with Israel, so as to prevent a debate at the General Assembly and maintain an atmosphere of moderation and restraint, which was reflected in the general debate. The Egyptian delegation cabled Cairo that Eban's speech, too, evinced a desire for moderation.

(7) After receiving their instructions from Fawzi, the members of the Egyptian delegation were astonished to read the item about 'Auja,[3] which seemed to contradict the spirit of their briefing in Cairo. They sent a telegram of frustration and anger to Cairo. (8) 'Azmi promised to have Riad contact Eban. Eban, too, sent a detailed report.[4]

Notes

1. The conversation took place over dinner at the home of Arthur Lourie on 1 October. See also No. 384.
2. See No. 341 and n. 2 there.
3. See No. 362, paragraph 3.
4. See No. 401, n. 2, and No. 406, n. 5.
5. See Najar to Rafael, 5 October 1953, 93.03/3044/9. For subsequent contacts with 'Azmi, see No. 440.

411. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to M. Sharett. 6 October 1953

Copy: 130.02/2434/4

Tekoah reports that Dayan, at a meeting with Bennike and Vigier on 5 October, proposed that work on the Benot-Yaaqov canal be halted after Bennike informs Israel and Syria that the negotiations conducted in the autumn should be renewed. If no agreement is reached within three months, Bennike will offer his proposal for resolving the issue of guarantees for land-ownership rights, water rights, and perhaps also a disengagement of forces. During this three-month period only work that has no direct connection with the digging of the canal, such as paving roads, would be carried out.

Bennike said that he had already stated his position.[1] Vigier's response was less negative. It was agreed they would consider Dayan's proposal.

Tekoah adds that the director of Tahal [the National Water Planning Authority] stated that he needs another two-and-a-half weeks to finish digging the first section of the canal.

In the interim, efforts are under way to stop publication, now and in the

future, of reports about the increased pace of work. The press officer has spoken with the editorial boards of the newspapers.

Tekoah appends to his letter the complaints filed by Israel, Syria, and the chairman of the Mixed Armistice Commission concerning work in the demilitarized zone.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 381.
2. The attached copies have been omitted here. They are all in File 130.02/2434/4.

412. E. Elath (London) to M. Sharett. 7 October 1953

Copy: 130.02/2419/1

Continuing his previous telegram, Elath attempts to analyze how Israel should prepare for the changes liable to follow the signing of an Anglo-Egyptian accord. Elath qualifies his proposed solutions in two respects. First, he acknowledges that some issues can be assessed properly only from Israel and not from London, so his perspective may be distorted. Second, he recognizes that in presenting these solutions one must take account of domestic public opinion. With these qualifications, he offers Sharett, on a personal basis, his thoughts on two matters that have preoccupied him recently.

(1) *Peace with Egypt:* It is true that there can be no certainty that the Anglo-Egyptian accord will have a positive effect on Egypt's relations with Israel. All the same, one should not dismiss the possibility, which might result from changes to be anticipated in Egyptian foreign policy when it is less under the sway of psychological factors stemming from an inferiority complex and bitterness against the West. When it frees itself from those complexes it may be able to view peace with Israel as an arrangement that does not infringe upon its national honor. The need for development and progress, too, could bring Naguib to make peace with Israel. Elath heard similar remarks from Pannikar[2] and from Foreign Office personnel in London.

There is no guarantee that matters will move in this direction rather than in the opposite one: that is, an attempt to avenge the Egyptian rout at the hands of the Israel Defence Forces and to defeat Israel on the battlefield. It is not inconceivable that when Britain can no longer be invoked to distract Egyptian public opinion from domestic problems Naguib may want to make Israel the scapegoat, a tactic that would meet with the approval of radical elements close to the present regime (the Muslim Brotherhood).

Then, too, Egypt's ties with the other Arab countries and its status in the Arab League are apt to impede an understanding with Israel, even should Naguib himself be disposed to one. In view of the revolutionary changes to be expected in Egypt, Elath recommends seeking ways to defend Israel against anticipated threats, while at the same time investigating the prospects for an accord.

Elath fears that after Egypt and Britain conclude an accord the United States, with passive support from Britain and France, will renew its pressure on Israel to reach an agreement with the Arab states. Hence he proposes that instead of acting under pressure, which would harm Israel's prestige and weaken its bargaining position, Israel take the first step soon after the signing of an Anglo-Egyptian agreement, renew its contacts with Naguib, and propose discussing the normalization of relations. It is important to think about the desirable lineaments of such an agreement.

(2) *The problem of security:* The anticipated change in Egypt's military potential, in the wake of the military and economic assistance it will receive from Great Britain and the United States, is a source of concern. Israel is liable to find itself on the horns of a grave dilemma: (a) arming itself at any cost; or (b) seeking ways to guard itself against the anticipated dangers. Even should Britain and the United States prove willing, by virtue of the Tripartite Declaration, to supply weapons to Israel to preserve its military balance with Egypt, the question arises: can Israel bear the financial burden involved?

On the other hand, it can be assumed that there will be economic and social developments in Egypt that will enhance its regional status. It could serve as an example for other Arab countries, such as Iraq, whose oil production could help reinforce its own status in the region. In light of these developments, Elath fears there may be those who favor a preemptive strike to prevent the strengthening and development of Egypt and other countries in the region. Elath rejects this option out of hand. He cautions that a preventive war would destroy Israel's status among friendly states for whom the preservation of peace is a cornerstone of their foreign policy. The Jewish communities in those countries can continue to aid Israel only as long as their governments persist in a cordial attitude towards Israel. What is more, Elath argues, even should Israel manage to inflict another military catastrophe on the Arabs, such a victory would only be the prelude to a third round. Given the psychological climate in the Arab world, where self-confidence is mounting and nationalist longings overshadow revolutionary development, it is doubtful whether military defeat would long restrain the rising desire for revenge.

For this reason Elath suggests that Israel strengthen its ties with Great Britain and the United States, so that it will not have to rely exclusively on its own might. Elath stresses that with changes in the Middle East in the offing, Israel must demonstrate both initiative and flexibility. He believes

that the key to an understanding with the friendly Western powers lies with Britain, which has more essential direct interests in the Middle East than does the United States. Hence he recommends strengthening ties with London.

Notes

1. See No. 383.
2. Elath met with Pannikar, India's ambassador to Egypt, on 6 September. One of the topics of their conversation was relations between Israel and the Arabs. Pannikar analyzed the situation on this issue in several Arab countries and gave his impression of the mood there. As far as Egypt was concerned, he believed that the agreement with Britain would be concluded by the end of the year but would not necessarily lead to an Egyptian-Israeli rapprochement. There was definitely no prospect of such a rapprochement until after the agreement was signed. Pannikar found more evidence of a realistic approach towards Israel and a willingness to recognize its existence in Egypt than in any other Arab country. Naguib was prepared to implement this practical approach, because he understood the need for quiet along the borders in order to devote his energy and resources to obtaining economic and social stability (130.15/3744/1).
3. The reference is to the Tripartite Declaration of 24 May 1950. See Vol. 5, No. 245.

413. A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram). 8 October 1953

Notes

1. See No. 397.
2. On 18 May 1951. See Vol. 6, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, p. 140.
3. According to the full report of the conversation, Eban said: "In short, without substantially altering the character or dimensions of existing political units in the Middle East, a revolution could take place in the relations between those units." (See n. 5 below.)
4. See No. 391.
5. See the report on the meeting in File 130.02/2414/27. See also Shiloah to Eban, 12 October 1953, 93.08/357/49; compare *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1340–44.

414. Western Europe Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Delegation in New York. 9 October 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2330/20

The Foreign Ministry relays the contents of Eshel's telegram to Goldmann from Vienna. Eshel reported on his meeting with Chancellor Raab and

Foreign Minister Gruber. Eshel informed them of Goldmann's assessment of Austria's most recent stand as being tantamount to a halt to the negotiations,[1] much to his regret. He added that the arguments made to Beckelman by the deputy chancellor sounded like transparent pretexts. Eshel laid before them the history of Jewish-Austrian relations and the active participation of a considerable portion of the local population in the annihilation of Jews. When Eshel mentioned the Austrian Nazis, the foreign minister interrupted him and said that Austria would not pay reparations. Eshel replied that, for the present, no such demand was being made; however, should the negotiations fail, he believed the Jewish people would raise the issue of Austrian guilt. The chancellor replied that the exaggerated claims of the Jewish organizations had stirred up considerable public anger. Gruber added that Austria's limited economic capacity must be taken into account. Eshel retorted that 300 million schillings for heirless property, to be spread over a number of years, would not strain Austria unduly. The chancellor tried to prove that they were obliged to pay only for traceable property, whose dimensions were modest. Eshel said that many millions were being spent on German refugees who had flocked to Austria from Eastern European countries. Apart from traceable property, many Jewish possessions that had not been transferred to Germany were still in Austrian hands. Raab and Gruber refused to discuss a specific sum but stressed their fervent desire to reach an agreement. They promised that they would discuss the matter with the Austrian finance minister, who would return home soon. They doubted that they could persuade him to agree to the minimum demands of the Jewish organizations. When they asked Eshel to influence the latter, he replied that the organizations' demands were modest and they would not agree to less than $10 million.

Eshel's impression was that the Austrians are prepared to renew negotiations about heirless property, but it is not yet clear whether they would commit themselves to the amount requested by the organizations. He believes that a decision will be taken during the coming week.[2] Eshel proposed that the organizations defer a public statement about the failure of negotiations with Austria until the arrival of addition information from Vienna. The Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem concurs.

Notes

1. The reference is to the position taken by the Austrian finance minister and deputy chancellor in their conversation with the representative of the Jewish organizations on 30 September. Both stated that their government could not discuss the issue of reparations for heirless property as long as there was a possibility of heirs turning up. In the wake of that conversation, on 6 October Goldmann sent a personal cable to the deputy chancellor, informing him that the organizations would be obliged to

announce the failure of the negotiations if the Austrian government did not meet their demand for 300 million schillings in reparations for heirless property. On the beginning of the negotiations with Austria, see No. 337, n. 1.

2. The Austrian government did not revise its decision. The Austrian chancellor replied to Goldmann's telegram of 6 October (see above) on 13 November 1953. He reiterated the Austrian position, as presented in the meeting with Beckelman, but toned it down somewhat by agreeing to consider the establishment of two separate funds for heirless property, one Jewish and the second Christian. (The letter is appended to the review of the negotiations with the Jewish organizations, 12 January 1954, 130.11/2511/13.)

415. Sh. Divon (Paris) to G. Rafael. 11 October 1953

Copy: 130.15/3744/1

Following up the report of 8 October[1] on his talks with Abd al-Rahman Sadiq, Divon elaborates on the following points:

(1) Members of the Revolutionary Command Council entertain serious fears that the deterioration in the country's economic situation is about to reach proportions that could endanger the regime. On the other hand, Gamal Abdel Nasser, who had been disposed to absolute neutrality, has come to understand that massive Western military and economic aid is imperative to remedy the situation and this cannot be achieved without an accord with the British. Nasser and his colleagues regretfully admit that they have no alternative to a policy that effectively means joining the Western camp. True, they are talking of efforts to preserve Egyptian independence and freedom of action, but the realists understand that signing an agreement will make neutralism untenable.

(2) The trials and announcements about conspiracies and insurrectionist plots must be viewed against the background of a growing sense of insecurity and the rising influence of the intelligence services in political matters. The Germans are contributing considerably to this state of affairs by helping to improve the technical operation of the Egyptian intelligence services. Suspicion of the British is deeply rooted; the natural tendency is to inflate the value of any British action. The action taken to forestall unrest also struck at the Wafd party and Mustafa Nahhas. Many believe that despite the calm prevailing after the arrests they have damaged the Council's reputation.

(3) As for Arab League activity, Nasser admits, according to Sadiq, that they have not fully considered the matter. They do not fear interference by the League and are willing for it to deal with all sorts of issues, such as North Africa. Nasser has also decided that the League should be involved in the conflict with the British, raising the issue at the United Nations and drawing the attention of world public opinion. During his talk with Nas-

ser, the possibility had even been raised that Sadiq serve as the Council's representative to the League's secretariat, so as to safeguard Egyptian interests.

(4) Nasser is swiftly and methodically bolstering his influence, while Naguib's star is waning. He relies on Zakariya Mūḥi al-Din, head of the intelligence services, who was recently named minister of the interior. Although there are differences of opinion within the Council, there are no serious schisms. All members feel that much remains to be done to buttress their status. The young officers who instigated the revolution fear degeneration or betrayal of its ideals by some members of the Council.

(5) With regard to Israel, Nasser emphasized the need for absolute confidentiality. He asked Sadiq whether he thought Israel had informed the Americans about their contacts with him, given that the American ambassador in Cairo asked him about contacts between Egypt and Israel. According to Sadiq, Nasser told the ambassador that Israeli messages are occasionally transmitted via London, Paris, Rome, Washington, and Ankara, and the Egyptians listen to what they are told. In the present circumstances, however, they could not arrange a meeting to conduct basic talks, since all efforts are being directed towards achieving a solution to the Suez problem. After this issue has been resolved, they will be able to turn their attention to the many other problems besetting them, with Israel at the top of the list. Until such time, he hoped that relations with Israel would be marked by mutual understanding; he would be happy to hear what Israel has to say.

Divon comments that, in his opinion, Nasser's statements should not be taken seriously; Israel should not entertain the idea of a serious Egyptian attempt at dialogue. For now, Divon's assessment is that the Egyptian objective is to lull Israel to keep it from interfering in their conflict with the British.

Divon adds that the idea of military revenge still exists in Egypt; its intensity should not be underestimated. He believes that the disposition towards anti-Israel aggression will intensify after a Suez accord has been reached.

Note

1. The report has not been located.

416. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 12 October 1953

Coded Tel.: 740; Outg.: 130.09/2309/15

Responding to Eban's telegram,[1] the Ministry supports the arguments he presented to Dulles. Prevailing opinion in the Ministry is that the first

manifestation of U.S. friendship should be lifting the economic sanctions and releasing the first installment of the grant, without linking this to Bennike's activities. The release of the funds need not be made public. It is difficult to curb reports of the sanctions in Israel. Some assert that no effort should be made to keep a lid on the story; the United States should be made to wear its badge of shame in public. A dangerous precedent would be set should the United States withhold the grant until Israel capitulates to Bennike or the Security Council. Israel has reliable information that the State Department dictated to Cordier the line of action he instructed Bennike to follow. The State Department's attempts to use the United Nations to make life difficult for Israel—as if there were no American policy of appeasing the Arabs and the source of all the frictions between the U.S. and Israel is the latter's friction with the United Nations—must be frustrated.

Note

1. See No. 413

417. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to the Israel Delegation to the United Nations. 12 October 1953

Coded Tel.: 444; Outg.: 130.09/2330/20

Replying to Eban's telegram,[1] Rafael instructs him to meet again with 'Azmi or Riad and convey the following message:

(1) The establishment of an installation in 'Auja[2] stemmed exclusively from settlement considerations and has no military implications. The demilitarized zone is Israeli territory in every way except for the restrictions on maintaining a military presence there. Israel will stringently adhere to this restriction.

(2) Egypt's violation of the diplomatic truce and spotlighting of its border with Israel had been exploited by Great Britain, which adopted a more forceful stance in the negotiations with Egypt. After several months of silence on the subject, they again insisted that the principle of free passage through the Suez Canal must be included in the new agreement.

(3) Israel is not sitting idly by. It has asked the governments of Britain and the United States to provide military and political guarantees, in view of the possibility that the Canal base might be transferred to Egyptian control, in addition to guarantees of free passage through the Canal. In its note,[3] Israel stressed that it is compelled to make these demands by Egypt's perpetuation of the state of war and its hostile acts. At the same time, it was pointed out that Israel does not intend to impede the realization of

Egypt's just demands.

(4) Egypt's hostile attitude forces Israel to adopt a policy that could be detrimental to Egypt's prime objective and interests, whether military or economic. In view of this, Egypt should consider whether continuing the state of war is worthwhile.

(5) Based on these assumptions, Israel proposes conducting a detailed and practical discussion on enhancing border security and ensuring freedom of navigation through the Canal.

Rafael adds, for Eban's eyes only, that Israel is planning to send a tanker through the canal.

Notes

1. See No. 410.
2. See No. 401, n. 2.
3. See Nos. 166, 167, and 424.
4. Najar's telegram to Rafael, 9 October 1953. Najar reports on an article in the *New York Times* that had caused a considerable stir in Egypt and led 'Azmi to request a meeting to clear the air. According to the article, Israel had informed the Three Powers that an Anglo-Egyptian agreement would endanger the balance of forces in the region, that the Suez base must not be placed at Egypt's disposal, and that Britain must retain the right to operate it in the event of a general attack on the region (130.09/2331/2).

418. A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram). 12 October 1953

Note

1. The Syrian note concerning the diversion of the Jordan River in the area of the Benot-Yaaqov Bridge was sent to the UN secretary-general on 12 October 1953. For the text of the note, see Zinder's telegram to the UN Division of the Foreign Ministry, 14 October 1953, 130.16/2954/4.

419. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 12 October, 1953

Coded Tel.: 630; Inc.: 130.09/2310/4

Eban responds to telegram 738.[1] In light of Russell's statements to Eytan, he proposes telling the former that Egyptians who met with Embassy staff in the United States had cautioned them against thinking that Egypt is close to making peace with Israel. These officials also transmitted a message

from Fawzi to the effect that when the time comes for talks with Israel, Egypt will oppose any outside intervention.[2] It was Eban's impression that it was Russell who sold Stevenson the idea of imposing a solution from the outside. Eban tried to counter this concept in his talk with Dulles.[3]

Notes

1. The telegram reported Naguib's statement to the U.S. ambassador in Cairo, to the effect that after a settlement was reached with Britain "peace would be concluded with Israel." Russell, who passed this information on to Gass, commented on that occasion that in his opinion there was no prospect of direct negotiations or mediation between Israel and Egypt without third-party intervention to lay down the conditions of an agreement. This statement triggered anxiety in the Foreign Ministry that the State Department "was again considering imposing an agreement" (U.S. Division to Eban, 12 October 1953, 130.09/2309/15).
2. See No. 410.
3. See No. 413.
4. See No. 431, n. 5.

420. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 13 October 1953

Copy: 130.02/2480/1

Eban explains that his telegram of 25 September[1] may have been drafted in a state of emotional turmoil; this had perhaps led to a certain amount of obscurity, both in phrasing and in the logical exposition of the ideas that were preoccupying him then. In any case, he asserts that his telegram contains the germ of a concept that he cannot abandon, even after reading Sharett's reaction.[2]

First, Eban clarifies that it was not his intention to complain about the heavy workload; he has never entertained the thought that development projects vital to Israel should be cancelled out of apprehension that the country's representatives might not be able to deal with their international repercussions. He meant only to state that in a diplomatic campaign, as in a military one, there is a danger of overextending the front and spreading one's forces too thin. In his opinion, Israel is expecting too much consideration from its friends. In this respect, he cites the many demands that Israel has presented to the United States, including: a fundamental reevaluation of its entire Mid-East policy; that it not implement its plans for arms supplies to the region; that it adopt a firm stand against the Arab states on the issue of the refugees; the somewhat complicated idea that it is the duty of the United States to aspire to peace without getting actively involved in achieving it; and, finally, repeated requests for economic aid.

Many of these problems are also the subject of information campaigns at the United Nations, and American Jewry must also be mobilized to help achieve these aims.

Eban argues that success in these battles requires that Israel draw on reserves of sympathy and understanding, and these are not unlimited. An Israeli representative who is asked to meet with influential persons does not know where to begin. If he makes too many demands he will weaken his impact. This situation, which requires jumping frantically from one subject to another and an effort to mobilize support and understanding for many and varied issues, passed the breaking point with the issue of the Benot-Yaaqov canal.

Eban agrees with Sharett's assertion that he raised his objections with the benefit of hindsight, rather than anticipating developments. Even so, this did not exempt him from the obligation to seek a way out of the difficulty after he realized its gravity. He had known of the existence of the Benot-Yaaqov plan and even expressed approval of it, when he visited Israel, on two accounts: (1) He had hoped it would be possible to carry out the work without UN opposition. This was not a vain illusion, since work had been under way for several weeks without any opposition in principle having been expressed; had there not been a changing of the guard in the UN observer force, the work might have continued in accordance with Riley's 1951 terms. (2) He had hoped that even should some obstacle require a temporary interruption of the project, the start of work would create a "claim" that would generate moral and practical rights. Hence he had favored starting work, as a calculated risk that held out much promise.

However, even though it had been desirable to commence the project and it was necessary to stand up for the right to continue working on it, once Bennike had rendered his decision that the work must cease Israel should have desisted immediately and not ignored the UN ruling. Given Israel's international situation, it is unwise to go against the United Nations. Continuing work in defiance of the ruling of the UN representative cannot enhance Israel's standing. Rather, it can only impair its chances of winning this particular diplomatic round.

Eban argues that it is preferable to stop work early, at a stage when it is still possible to exploit the interruption to shore up Israel's standing in world public opinion, rather than later, when the cessation would be interpreted as an inevitable surrender to strong international pressure. Submitting then would not promote cooperation with the international agencies whose agreement is essential for completion of the project.

Eban believes that immediate compliance with Bennike's ruling would have been to Israel's advantage. He enumerates the advantages to Israel of such a step: gaining a moral advantage in the debate with Bennike and the Security Council, preventing any disruption in relations with the United States with regard to the grant, amassing public sympathy, and mobilizing

Jewish support. All these might have tipped the scales in the Security Council debate on the substance of the issue.

Eban makes bold to say that it is unfair to accuse the United States of interfering in the development of Israel after all the assistance it has given the country. He defers to Sharett's long experience before the birth of the state. Nevertheless, that period had been full of interruptions and delays in the implementation of Zionist projects; many had had to wait until funds were found or other obstacles to their completion were removed. Hence he asserts that he is entitled to allege political considerations as a factor to be taken into account. He does not view this as "renouncing the vision of development."

Notes

1. See No. 392. The conflicting dates are probably due to the time difference between Washington and Tel Aviv.
2. See No. 398.
3. See No. 397.
4. See No. 387.

421. A. Eban (New York) to the United States Division. 14 October 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.02/2331/2

Eban replies to a previous telegram concerning military aid.[1]

(1) The State Department has adopted a cautious and hesitant policy on military aid to Arab countries: (a) because Dulles himself is wary of increased Israeli criticism; (b) because several Arab governments have displayed apathy and coolness towards the American military delegation; and (c) because Eisenhower is not keen on the idea.

Despite this, the State Department has by no means abandoned the idea of allocating the funds. Byroade continues to support the idea, mainly because he does not wish to admit to Congress that he had been unable to implement the plan, since in that case Congress would be most unlikely to renew the authorization and appropriation next year.

(2) According to Herzog, the Department of Defense was never very enthusiastic about supplying arms to the Arabs, because it saw no military advantage accruing from such a step. Since, however, Congress approved a certain sum, the Department is attempting to make full use of the military appropriation; otherwise Congress is likely to cut back on the military aid program. On the other hand, there have been no preparations or negotiations for arms deliveries, and Col. Sievers' visit is the only step taken to date.

(3) There is no plan to extend military aid to the Arabs in the near future, but the intention is to start before the end of the fiscal year.

(4) No detailed plan has been drafted yet.

(5) In conclusion, the problem of military aid stands at the center of Israel's diplomatic activity in Washington and is also a prominent theme in appeals to the Administration and in speeches by American Jews. There have been expressions in the American press of identification with Israel's concern. Dulles is impressed by the force of Israel's opposition. There is a possibility of achieving something through continued pressure, but it must not be assumed that diplomatic action has dissuaded the United States from arming the Arab states. If Britain and Egypt conclude an agreement, the danger could resurface, perhaps compounded by the provision of British in addition to American arms.

Notes

1. Sharett requested a reply to a previous telegram (No. 739) to Eban, concerning military assistance, and added his own opinion on the matter. In that earlier telegram, Bendor had reported on conflicting reports arriving from Washington: on the one hand, the State Department and the Defense Department were reported to be firmly resolved to provide immediate military assistance to the Arab countries and only afterwards to Israel; on the other hand, there was information that neither department was particularly eager to spend the allocation for arms to the Arabs, whereas there was a willingness to grant aid to Israel. Eban was asked to assess: (1) the State Department's attitude; (2) the Defense Department's attitude; (3) the odds that the Arabs would be granted military assistance in the near future; (4) what the Arabs would get and what Israel would get. Eban was asked to report what actions were being undertaken by Israel's representatives, both overtly and covertly, and their results. Bendor concluded the telegram by asking Eban what policy he thought should be adopted and whether it was worthwhile to submit aid plans to the Americans (telegram 739, 12 October 1953, 130.09/2309/15).

   In telegram 742, Sharett added that he was inclined: (1) to intensify, by every available means, the campaign against military assistance to the Arabs; (2) to immediately submit Israel's request for arms and military infrastructure; (3) to seriously weigh the possibility of refusing military assistance if weapons were provided to the Arabs but Israel received only military infrastructure. He asked for Eban's evaluation of this position, especially point (2) (13 October 1953, ibid.).
2. See No. 386.

422. M. Shalit (Washington) to the United States Division. 14 October 1953

Orig.: 130.02/2480/1

Shalit summarizes a meeting on the state of Israel–United States relations,

held on 9 October. Present were Eban, Shalit, Kollek, Herzog, and Shiloah.

I. The Overall Situation

(1) *The U.S. government:* The Administration wishes to maintain friendly relations with Israel while at the same time improving its cordial relations with Arab states. The situation that best suits the Administration is for American public opinion to believe that U.S.-Israel relations are sound and cordial, while foreign observers think that the relationship is cooling down.

The Administration's efforts to gain Stevenson's support for its Middle East policy—especially the time and energy devoted to this—indicate the importance that it attaches to the issue and its apprehension of domestic reaction to the new policy.

The State Department has been closely monitoring all Israeli actions and has magnified a series of incidents. Israel must be careful not to provide the State Department with opportunities for condemnation.

The main culprit is the Office of Middle East Affairs in the State Department. It has managed to win approval for its policy from the highest echelons. The suspension of the grant to Israel received White House approval and is in line with the Foreign Operations Administration's new overall policy, whereby diplomatic support is a precondition for economic aid. There has been a suspension of aid not only to Israel but also to Yugoslavia (because of the Trieste dispute).

(2) *Public opinion:* As Middle East problems such as Iran and Egypt near solution, the Arab-Israeli issue becomes more conspicuous and gains more attention. When there are clashes between Israel and the Arabs, public opinion usually supports Israel, but when Israel confronts the United Nations, public opinion supports the latter.

Recent incidents in Israel have alienated close and loyal friends. Even people such as Lipsky, Silver, Goldmann, and Blaustein, as well as the New York Yiddish press, expressed doubts as to the wisdom of Israeli policy, in light of the recent incidents and the Benot-Yaaqov canal issue. Embassy action to mobilize public opinion in the United States can succeed only if Israel modifies its "aggressive policy," as the Americans term it.

II. The Hula Situation

Continuation of the Hula project is harmful to Israel's standing in the United States. So far, the Embassy has managed to prevent the suspension of the grant from becoming public knowledge,[1] but this state of affairs cannot continue for long; press leaks are inevitable. Such leaks would harm: (a) Israel's credit rating (the purchasing mission has already been asked what is going on); (b) relations between Israel and the United States; and (c) public support for Israel. Some Americans would view suspension of the grant as a wise step.

The participants in the discussion expressed their understanding of the technical factors that mandate accelerating work on the Benot-Yaaqov canal, but felt that political considerations should take precedence over technical ones.

III. Suggested action following the last meeting with Dulles[2]

(1) Action aimed at getting public figures and members of Congress to put pressure on the Administration should be continued.

(2) This public action must be carried out discreetly and persistently over a long period of time.

(3) Efforts must be made to ensure that the suspension of the grant does not become public knowledge. Any leaks should not be confirmed.

(4) Dulles proposed that Israel clarify the issue of the border incidents with Byroade. The Embassy will propose an unofficial meeting with State Department personnel to discuss them. It is proposed that Israel admit it erred in some of the incidents, while presenting a long list of hostile Arab acts. The meeting with the State Department would take place only after the problem of the grant has been resolved.

IV. Recommendations for action in Israel

(1) The political situation should be explained to participants in the Jerusalem Conference.

(2) The Prime Minister should deliver a political speech to the conference and again outline Israel's peace plan.

(3) Israel's policy vis-à-vis the armistice commissions must be clarified. Should the policy of automatically denying Israel's participation in each and every incident be continued? Should mistakes be admitted in some of the border incidents? Is it possible to improve the personal relations between Israeli and UN representatives on the armistice commissions?

(4) Restraint should be exercised along the borders in order to avoid a barrage of complaints against Israel.

Notes

1. See No. 389.
2. See No. 413.
3. See No. 454 (Editorial Note).
4. See No. 362, n. 3.
5. See No. 431, n. 4.

423. M. Sharett to W. Eytan. 14 October 1953

Orig.: 130.02/2420/2

Sharett reports on the conclusions of a consultation in the Prime Minister's

Office on the problem of oil, in the wake of the British refusal to sell Kuwaiti oil to Israel. In addition to Sharett, the following participated in the meeting: Finance Minister Eshkol, the director-general of the Finance Ministry (P. Sapir), D. Horowitz, Konikoff, and Bartur.

It was decided that: (1) There is no point in taking retaliatory action against the refineries.[1] (2) It is advisable to purchase a certain amount of oil from Russia, especially if it can be a barter deal for Israeli citrus. (3) A note on the entire issue should be sent to the British government.[2] Even if this does not lead to a change of policy, it is important to voice a protest. (4) British Petroleum should be approached about slightly reducing the price of the oil it will provide instead of Kuwaiti oil. This point should be raised in the note. (5) If relations between the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and the Iranian government improve, the possibility should be investigated of bringing oil from Abbadan.

There was no discussion of any action vis-à-vis the United States, on the assumption that this was a British, not an American, initiative.

Notes

1. At the time, the Haifa refineries were jointly owned by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and Shell Oil. The former was one of the two concessionaires for Kuwaiti oil; Shell purchased its supplies from the American Gulf Oil Company, the other Kuwaiti concessionaire.
2. See Nos. 528 and 575.
3. For the text of the note, which was sent on 23 November, see No. 527.

424. Note from the Israel Ambassador in London to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom. 14 October 1953

Notes

1. Elath handed the note to the permanent undersecretary in the British Foreign Office on 14 October.
2. See No. 166 (Editorial Note) and No. 167.
3. See Vol. 5, No. 248.
4. See Vol. 6, Editorial Note, Main Volume, pp. 593–94, Companion Volume, p. 257.
5. For the reply to the note, see No. 483 and n. 1 there.

425. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington.[1] 14 October 1953

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2319/4

Rafael reports on the murders in Yahud: An inquiry conducted in cooperation with UN personnel disclosed that Arab infiltrators had thrown a grenade through an open window into a room, killing a mother and her two children, aged one-and-a-half and three. One of the other three children and an elderly woman of 70 who were in the house were seriously wounded. The investigators saw bloodstains and pieces of flesh on the walls of the room.

This was the first time the Jordanian authorities allowed an Israeli representative to enter Jordan, accompanied by a bloodhound, to pursue the trail. The trail led to a house opposite the railway station in Rantis.

Israel's complaint over the incident was discussed as an emergency issue at an ordinary session of the Mixed Armistice Commission.[2] Jordan was condemned for the infiltration and the killing of Israeli civilians. The Jordanian authorities were called upon to put an end to violations of the armistice agreement. The chairman voted with Israel. Jordan abstained.

Notes

1. Sent also to Paris, London, and Rome.
2. At 1:30 A.M. on 13 October 1953.
3. Not only did the Jordanian authorities permit the use of bloodhounds, Glubb, the commander of the Arab Legion, and his staff took a personal interest in the incident. Glubb promised Acheson to do everything possible to bring the guilty parties to justice. (See Bennike to Makleff, 14 October 1953, 130.02/2429/5.)
4. The meeting took place on 14 October. Jordan abstained, for the first time in two years. The Jordanian representative expressed his disgust at the incident and called it a loathsome crime, but doubted whether the footprints that had been found were definitive proof that the crime had been perpetrated by Jordanian citizens. He said that Glubb was taking a personal interest in the progress of the investigation and had asked that acts of retaliation, "which would adversely affect the conduct of their investigation and the maintenance of calm along the border," be avoided. (See the report on meeting that Notov sent to the Foreign Ministry, 14 October 1953, ibid.)

426. Editorial Note

IDF Raid on Qibya, 14 October 1953

At 9:30 P.M. on 14 October, soldiers from Unit 101 and an IDF paratroop

unit (about 100 men in all) crossed the border and attacked the village of Qibya and the nearby villages of Shuqba, Budrus, and Ni'lin. The raid was conducted after several incidents in which infiltrators from Jordan had attacked Israeli citizens, culminating in the murders in Yahud (see No. 425). Houses were blown up during the operation and dozens of people were killed or wounded. Reports on the number of slain ranged from 42 to 56 persons. At the meeting of the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission on 15 October, Israel was condemned for the action and for killing 42 persons, wounding 15 others, and blowing up 41 houses. It was called upon to take measures to prevent a repetition of such acts in the future.

For the Government's reaction to the operation, see No. 444. Cf. M. Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. 1, pp. 34 and 35–37.

427. G. Avner (Budapest) to Sh. Bentsur. 15 October 1953

Orig.: 130.11/2502/15

Continuing the theme of a previous dispatch,[1] Avner reaffirms his assessment that there is a chance that groups of immigrants will be allowed to leave Hungary. He proposes exploiting the difficult economic situation in Hungary, especially the drastic shortage of foreign currency, by offering them dollars. Information has been received from a local Party secretary and from an official in the Interior Ministry that consideration is being given to allowing Ultraorthodox Jews to emigrate, since they cannot be assimilated into Communist society. The Hungarians are hoping to obtain millions of dollars or raw materials in return for this gesture. Avner writes that the State Department has informed the Joint Distribution Committee of its agreement that the latter resume shipments of aid money if it can reach an accord on this matter with the Hungarians. In light of this information, Avner hopes that Israel, too, can obtain State Department approval for its proposal to transfer money to Hungary in return for its allowing Jewish emigration. He suggests approaching the Americans on this count.

The Joint is hesitant about a request to transfer money to Hungarian Jewry via the Jewish community in Stockholm. Avner asks Bentsur to intervene in this matter, since local funds are rapidly being depleted. A combined effort with the Joint and various communities abroad is necessary to arrange transfers of funds in a more legal manner and on a broader base. A direct appeal to Hungarian Jewish emigrés living in the West should also be attempted.

The local community has proposed arranging orders from Israel, Sweden, and America for thousands of ritual objects, to make it appear as if the foreign currency is being paid for exports, even though most of it will be

expended on aid. Avner does not support the community's proposal, but relays it to Sharett anyway.

Avner reports on the domestic situation in Hungary: the concessions granted to farmers as incentives; public opinion, which interprets this as a sign of weakness on the part of the regime; and the effects of a relaxation of the regime's severity on the Hungarian public in general and on the Jews in particular.

Avner asks that special instruction be given to his replacement at the legation. He recommends a cordial approach towards Ultraorthodox elements in Hungary. Despite Avner's known reservations about the Ultraorthodox and the rabbis, and despite the fact that he knows that most of them were anti-Zionist up to 1949 and perhaps still are, he nevertheless admits that they constitute the bastion of the small Jewish community in Hungary and struggle to maintain *Yiddishkeit* and strengthen the Jews against the regime through religious identification, Sabbath observance, and education of children. Avner adds that despite past accounts with the Ultraorthodox and the troubles they cause in Israel, these people are deserving of public sympathy. Even if a dyed-in-the-wool socialist is sent to Budapest to head the legation, he should know how to establish a good rapport with these people and encourage them when they approach the Israeli legation.

Finally, Avner expresses his regret at the decision to transfer him to another post and asks that a fitting replacement be found.

Notes

1. See Avner to Bentsur, 13 October 1953, 130.11/2497/7.
2. A typographical error in the original has been corrected.

428. G. Rafael to the Israel Delegation to the United Nations and the Israel Embassy in London. 15 October 1953

Notes

1. Dated 14 October 1963, 130.02/2425/11.
2. See No. 429 and n. 1 there.
3. See No. 397 and the reference in n. 3 there.
4. The memorandum, in File 130.02/2425/11, has been omitted here.
5. Dated 14 October 1953; ibid.
6. The reference is to Sharett's letter, in which he again informed Bennike, in advance of their meeting on 15 October, that Israel was prepared for a short suspension of work in the demilitarized zone (93.03/3008/6).

429. M. Sharett to A. Eban and the Israel Embassy in London (telegram). 15 October 1953

Notes

1. For the protocol of the meeting, see 130.02/2425/11.
2. See No. 458.
3. See No. 445.

430. A. Eban (New York) to the United States Division. 15 October 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2331/2

Eban accuses his colleagues in Jerusalem of misreading the political situation and of "an appalling lack of self-criticism." He explains that the current crisis is due not only to State Department policy, but also to the international repercussions of Israeli actions, especially military operations. Dulles's impression that Israel is intransigent and ignores world public opinion[1] is widely accepted and has even made inroads in the Jewish and Zionist camps. Leaders of the American Zionist Council have already informed Eban of their extreme concern and their sense that Israeli policy has been largely responsible for the cooling of pro-Israel feeling in the United States. This sentiment is more common than is realized. Jews are saying openly that Israel scarcely allows one crisis to die down before generating another.

Eban believes it makes no difference whether or not Dulles is sincere; what he says must be taken seriously. He proposes that his colleagues thoroughly investigate the extent to which Israeli policy is responsible for American reactions.

Notes

1. See No. 416.
2. See No. 413, paragraph 3.
3. The date of the transfer of the Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem.

431. A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram). 15 October 1953

Notes

1. See No. 442.

2. See No. 413.
3. See No. 389.
4. The reference is to the economic conference of leaders of Jewish communities in the United States and other Western countries, which convened in Jerusalem on 25–29 October. It resolved to raise $75 million to consolidate Israel's short-term debt.
5. Eban met with Stevenson on 2 October, the day after the Democratic leader had met with President Eisenhower and Dulles, who tried to persuade him to agree on a bi-partisan policy on Middle Eastern and Israeli affairs. Eban came away with the impression that Stevenson remained committed to the declared policy of the Democratic Party towards Israel. (See Shiloah to Eban, 12 October 1953, 93.08/357/49.)
6. On 8 October, the United States and Britain issued a joint communiqué: since their efforts to achieve agreement between Italy and Yugoslavia had failed, they would transfer Zone A in the northern section of the Trieste Free Zone to the Italian authorities. Zone A had been in British and American custody since the conclusion of the peace treaty with Italy.

432. A. Eban (New York) to G. Rafael. 15 October 1953

Coded Tel.: 238; Inc.: 130.09/2331/2

Eban cables that if Rafael's telegram[1] contains a detailed description of what was done,[2] it is clear that Israel has perpetrated "an act it cannot be proud of and that cannot be excused even by Arab crimes that preceded it." Eban fails to understand how those in Israel thought the time ripe for "a cruel reprisal." He anticipates "extremely harsh international reactions."[3]

Notes

1. The telegram has not been found.
2. The Qibya operation. See No. 426 (Editorial Note).
3. Rafael cabled that he was entirely in accord with the contents of Eban's telegram (18 October 1953, 130.09/2330/20).

433. Note from Sir Francis Evans to M. Sharett. 16 October 1953

Notes

1. See No. 426 (Editorial Note).
2. For Sharett's reply, see No. 461.

434. E. Elath to M. Sharett (telegram). 16 October 1953

Notes

1. See No. 426 (Editorial Note).
2. See No. 425 and nn. 3 and 4 there.
3. See No. 381.
4. The reference is to Bennike's request to facilitate searches by UN personnel in the Mt. Scopus demilitarized zone.
5. In another telegram, Elath evaluated Lloyd's "proposals" as "an extremely serious act with respect to their possible influence on future relations between the two countries," especially given the wide publicity that the Foreign Office had given to its immediate and direct intervention, while casting all blame on Israel. It was Elath's impression that even if Lloyd's words had been carefully chosen and meant to serve as a warning, rather than a threat, their intention was to warn Israel of a possible British reaction in the event of a similar incident in the future. Elath also expressed concern with the incident's possible negative impact on both public opinion and the Jewish community in Britain (17 October 1953, 130.09/2319/5).

   In another telegram, he wrote that despite his full understanding of the sentiments of the Israeli public and of the responsibility of defense policy-makers, he found it hard to understand how acts of retaliation could "radically solve the problem of infiltration. Would the political damage, meanwhile, not be greater than the doubtful achievements in the security domain?" (16 October 1953, ibid.). For Sharett's reply, see No. 479 and n. 2 there.
6. Cf. Eden to Evans, 16 October 1953, PRO, FO371/104789. See also the working paper prepared in advance of the meeting and Lloyd's notes, both dated 16 October 1953 (ibid.).

435. D. Hacohen (New York) to M. Sharett. 16 October 1953

Orig.: 130.02/2440/1

Hacohen reacts with abhorrence to the Qibya operation. He writes, in part: "This murderous frenzy that has seized our people—this Deir Yasin incident under the aegis of the authorities, at their full responsibility, carried out by the IDF[1]—literally freezes my blood." He adds that he finds it difficult to meet the eyes of persons at the UN who express their astonishment "at the Nazi actions of my colleagues and myself."

"Of course, interpretations and evasions will ensue," but these will not "change the facts a jot." "My world has grown dark. . . . Were you involved in this?"

Note

1. See No. 426 (Editorial Note).

436. Message from the President of the United States to the Prime Minister of Israel. 16 October 1953

Notes

1. The message was delivered to Sharett in Tel Aviv.
2. On 7 October, Eric Johnston was appointed as President Eisenhower's personal representative in the Middle East. His main assignment was to obtain the agreement of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Israel for shared use of the water of the Jordan River, along the lines of the regional water plan known as "the Main Plan" (see No. 452 and n. 2 there). Johnston was asked, when adapting that plan to political exigencies, to take into account the importance of resettling a maximum number of refugees in as short a time as possible and of the American desire to assist the economic development of Israel and the Arab countries. With regard to the armistice lines, his instructions were that Israel not have exclusive physical control of the Sea of Galilee and the Yarmuk canal and that it be required to make territorial concessions in this region; the demilitarized zones in the Jordan Valley would be abolished. The Litani River remained outside the scope of the project and of Johnston's negotiations. See *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1347–53; see also Eban's telegram to Elath, 19 October 1953, 93.04/40/19.

437. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 16 October 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2310/4

Despite the Syrian demand to convene the Security Council,[1] Eban repeats his previous recommendation[2] that the Government resolve on and make public the following statement:

(1) The Government of Israel rejects some of the assumptions and concepts of the UN representative and has therefore decided to submit its contentions and explanations to the Security Council.

(2) Israel believes that there is no justification for delaying the project, which will produce only good and harms no one. Despite the fact that Israel has acted in accordance with United Nations and Security Council principles laid down in 1951, it has nevertheless decided on a temporary work stoppage, as a token of its willingness to improve the atmosphere and reduce tension in advance of the Security Council debate.

(3) The Government has instructed its representatives at the United Nations to approach the president of the Security Council and the secretary-general about fixing a date for the Security Council meeting and setting its agenda.

Eban explains that he proposes totally ignoring the Syrian initiative in order to reaffirm Israel's position that the Syrian intervention was unfounded. He adds that American Jewish leaders and Embassy staff agree

that something should be done that would be interpreted as a honoring the authority of the UN. He adds that the Qibya operation was an extremely grave action that shocked the public, engendering a crisis of confidence in the State of Israel of a magnitude unknown since the establishment of the state. This crisis makes it doubly imperative to immediately eliminate a clash between Israel and the UN over the Benot-Yaaqov canal project.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 418, n. 1. On 16 October, Syria dispatched a note to the president of the Security Council (UN Document S/3108/Rev 1) requesting that the Council be convened to discuss the Israeli work to divert the Jordan in the demilitarized zone near the Benot-Yaaqov Bridge.
2. See Eban to Sharett, telegram X53, 15 October 1953, 130.09/2321/2.
3. For the Government's decision, see No. 445.

438. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 17 October 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2310/4

In the wake of the Qibya incident, Eban believes that Israel should adopt a candid and self-confident position and broaden the scope of its argument to embrace the entire issue of infiltration from Jordan and its consequences.

In advance of the Security Council debate,[1] it is extremely important to decide how the incident will be presented. Should the operation be described as morally acceptable and justified, or should it be described as the result of a loss of patience after long months of cruel provocation by the Jordanians? He proposes adopting the second option and stresses that he personally is incapable of praising the action or justifying it without reservations.

Note

1. On 17 October, the Western powers sent identical notes to the president of the Security Council (UN Documents S/3109, S/3110, S/3111), requesting an urgent discussion of the tension between Israel and its neighbors, especially the recent acts of violence. (For the text of the notes, see File 130.16/2948/5.) The Security Council discussed the issue from 19 October to 25 November. See Editorial Notes, Nos. 475, 507, and 534.

439. H. Berger (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 17 October 1953

Coded Tel.: 47; Inc.: 130.09/2331/2

Berger's telegram is meant for Sharett, Lavon, and the Mapai secretariat. He writes that the Qibya operation and work on the Benot-Yaaqov canal have altered Israel's position not only at the General Assembly but throughout the world. The fact that the work in the north has not ceased, as Bennike requested,[1] has transformed Israel's role from accuser to accused in the Security Council. The world had been ready to accept Israel's position on the refugees and even on Jerusalem, but will not show understanding for these alongside continued work in the north. The Qibya affair, coming on top of everything else, creates an image of systematic violation of commitments and of UN resolutions and instructions. Berger fears that the Powers have been given a pretext to settle Arab problems at Israel's expense. He is worried that important matters such as arms procurement and the economy will be jeopardized. Israel has given the impression that it is insensitive to world opinion; actions designed to bolster its security actually endanger it. Years of work are now threatened. In his opinion, it must be stated that the Qibya operation had not received the Government's absolute approval and does not reflect its policy. The radio announcement that this was an act of reprisal by a nerve-wracked group of civilians provides an opening in this direction. The impression in New York is that foreign policy, defense policy, and development projects are run by three separate and uncoordinated agencies. Berger sums up that until work in the north is halted, accompanied by a statement that the halt is temporary, and until disapproval of the attack on Qibya is exhibited, Israel's situation in the world will be unbearable, with few chances for improvement in the near future.

Notes

1. Cf. No. 428.
2. See No. 426 (Editorial Note).

440. E. Najar to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram). 17 October 1953

Notes

1. See No. 417.

2. See ibid., paragraph 3, n. 3.
3. See No. 406, n. 5. See also No. 401, n. 2.
4. A friendship pact signed between Britain and Libya on 29 July 1953. The treaty was accompanied by a military and financial agreement, whereby Libya agreed to provide the British armed forces with military facilities and services, in exchange for British financial aid.
5. For subsequent contacts with 'Azmi, see No. 481.

441. A. Eban (New York) to M. Sharett. 18 October 1953

Coded Tel.: 52; Inc.: 130.09/2331/2

Eban cables that the main objective during the first stage of the Security Council debate on the Qibya incident must be to prevent a one-sided condemnation of Israel. Israel must vigorously and even angrily demand of the three Powers that it not be criticized or that any criticism also include the acts of violence committed against it, which had resulted in serious casualties. It should be made clear that a one-sided resolution will not awaken any moral or emotional resonance in Israel and that without Israel's cooperation there is no chance of solving the problem. In particular, it should be hinted to the British and French that they themselves are in no position to adopt a self-righteous attitude and that Israel will make a categorical declaration to that effect if it is pushed to the wall. Eban adds that at his meeting at the State Department the next day he will point out that this is a decisive test of America's impartiality. He will remind them how they found themselves out on a limb when they issued a one-sided condemnation of Israel in May 1951, whereas the present case is a response to dozens of acknowledged violations of the armistice.[1]

Notes

1. See No. 451.
2. See Vol. 6, Companion Volume, Editorial Notes, pp. 119 and 125–26.

442. M. Sharett to the Israel Embassy in Washington (telegram). 18 October 1953

Notes

1. The meeting took place on 17 October. Cf. the report in *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1364–67.
2. See No. 436 and n. 2 there.

3. See No. 429.
4. See Nos. 444 and 445.
5. See No. 381 (appendix).
6. See No. 389.
7. On the substance of the Byroade-Goldmann meeting, cf. Sharett to Eban, telegram 248, 16 October 1953, 130.09/2339/1.

443. D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 18 October 1953

Copy: IMDEA 230.72/896

Ben-Gurion responds to the exchange of telegrams between Eban and the Ministry concerning work at the Benot-Yaaqov Bridge. He expresses understanding of Eban's apprehensions about the effect on U.S. and UN public opinion and Israel's relations with the U.S. government. He agrees that each action must be weighed to determine whether it is justified and correct and how it would be received by world public opinion.

Nevertheless, Israeli actions can be divided into those that are ephemeral and those that are more enduring. Had Israel not declared its independence in May 1948 it would have endangered its very existence, despite the military and political risks involved, because not only the Arabs, but also the Americans, were opposed. Ben-Gurion views the decisions taken in October and December 1948 to repulse the Egyptian invasion and the late-1949 decision to transfer government ministries to Jerusalem as absolutely necessary, despite the fact that they displeased various world leaders. He compares the decision on the Jordan waters to these. In his opinion, Israel will achieve independence only when it produces the food required by its citizens. Without this independence, it will not be secure, economically or militarily. Without the Jordan waters, Israel is not economically viable, there is no possibility of further settlement, and there will be no water for agriculture. Bennike's decision[1] that work cease until after an agreement has been concluded constituted a death sentence for Israeli control of the Jordan waters. One can also assume that Syria will never conclude an agreement if it knows that Israel's water supply depends on it.

As for the argument that Arab-Israeli relations might change in the future, Ben-Gurion replies that one cannot know when this will happen, and time is crucial for Israel. The Arabs can wait a year, ten years, 50 years, or even a century; but Israel cannot afford this luxury. It must attain economic independence quickly, or face destruction. Israel must be prepared to absorb Jews from the entire world; were it to be destroyed, it could not fulfill its main mission. In Ben-Gurion's opinion, the Jordan waters are vital to Israel's destiny; if the choice is between the danger of displeasing

friends and losing the Jordan waters—meaning the loss of economic independence and security—the former option must be chosen.

Ben-Gurion is aware of the extreme difficulty that Israel's emissary has in justifying the Government's position. He comforts Eban that it's difficult to be a Jew and that Jews have been facing such situations for three thousand years or more. Ben-Gurion is convinced that from the perspective of Israel's long-range goals, Bennike's demand must not be complied with.

Ben-Gurion adds that Israel's "friends" (with and perhaps also without quotation marks) will always choose the path of least resistance and avoid conflict with the Arabs, appeasing Shishakli rather than weighing the issues on their own merits and attempting to assess the significance of the Jordan waters for Israel.

Notes

1. See No. 381 (appendix).
2. See No. 444 (Editorial Note) and No. 445.

444. Editorial Note

Government Debate on Suspension of Work near the Benot-Yaaqov Bridge and the Qibya Operation, 18 October 1953

The chief of staff, Maj.-Gen. Mordechai Makleff, was present. The meeting opened with a lengthy review by Sharett of the sequence of events and the diplomatic activity related to the Jordan River canal project. He reported on his most recent meeting with Bennike (see No. 429), filled in the ministers on recent developments in the relationship with the U.S. Administration, as reflected in Eban's reports, and read out the latter's telegrams of 12–16 October. Sharett also reported on the contents of the message from Eisenhower to the Prime Minister (see No. 436 and n. 1 there), the British note (see No. 433), and British reactions to the Qibya incident; on the Western Powers' approach to the president of the Security Council (see No. 438, n. 1); and on his most recent meeting with Russell (No. 442). In advance of the anticipated Security Council debate, Sharett submitted three proposals to the Government: (1) to lodge two complaints with the Security Council—against Egypt concerning the Suez Canal and against Jordan for failing to implement Article VIII of the armistice agreement; (2) to suspend work on the Jordan River project pending the Security Council debate; (3) to issue a statement on the Qibya operation expressing regret at what had happened.

Ben-Gurion read out his letter to Abba Eban (No. 443). He opposed

Sharett's proposal to turn to the Security Council and to suspend work on the project in the north. He suggested weighing a suspension of work only after the Security Council had adopted a resolution. As for Qibya, Ben-Gurion said that he had been on vacation at the time; but he would have approved the operation had he been asked to do so.

From his acquaintance with IDF officers, said Ben-Gurion, he knew that none of them wanted to shed the blood of even a single Arab. At the same time, he said, any statement on the Qibya operation must not mention the army's involvement, since it really was not the regular army that had conducted the operation, but a special unit set up to carry out reprisal raids. He rejected Sharett's contention that nobody would believe the Israeli version that residents of the border region had carried out the Qibya operation. It must be emphasized that the frontier settlements possessed both weapons and trained fighters, and it was they who had carried out the raid.

Ben-Gurion also reported on his meetings with the American minister and the British ambassador. He said that Britain's responsibility for the activities of the Arab Legion and for incidents along the Jordanian border must be stressed in the Security Council debate.

Israel Rokach supported Ben-Gurion's view that work on the Jordan canal should not be suspended, but differed with regard to the reaction to the Qibya operation. He said that Israel was strong enough to carry out operations without harming women and children; the women and children could have been evacuated before their houses were blown up. The operation had undermined Israel's international standing, he said. He suggested announcing that the operation was carried out by Jewish "security units."

Pinhas Rosen supported Sharett's proposals to appeal to the Security Council and to suspend work in the north. Concerning Qibya, he protested that the retaliatory action had been carried out without a Government debate. The Government's decision on reprisals, adopted in June (see No. 261), suited the situation that existed then; but in the interim conditions had changed and a new situation had emerged. It was his impression that the operation had been carried out without Sharett's knowledge; he protested that such an important and fateful decision had been taken by the Chief of Staff and the acting Defence Minister, without consulting the Government. Rosen said that he did not believe in the effectiveness of retaliatory action; had he been asked, prior to the operation, he would have opposed it. He disagreed with Ben-Gurion's idea of blaming Britain for the situation along the borders. He agreed that the army's involvement in the operation must be denied and supported Sharett's position that they must express regret at the deed.

Moshe Shapira seconded Sharett's proposal to turn to the Security Council but rejected the idea of suspending work in the north. Only the Security Council could instruct Israel to suspend work, not the UNTSO commander. He admitted that he had no ready solution to the problem of

murder and infiltration, but dissociated himself from the Qibya operation. He feared that Israel had over-reacted and might have to pay a heavy price. Shapira spoke of the moral aspect of the operation and criticized those who had taken the decision. He too believed that IDF involvement in the operation must be denied, but was furious that a military operation had been decided upon without prior Government debate. The Government had little value if it did not know of such an operation and had no say in its execution, he said. "However important the acting Defense Minister may be, he is not entitled to arrogate to himself such a responsibility—deciding between war and peace." This function belonged to the Government; "the nation has not entrusted such a decision to one man; he should not have assumed such a responsibility."

Pinhas Lavon supported Ben-Gurion's proposal not to stop work in the north and not to approach the Security Council. With regard to Qibya, he said that ordering the operation had been within his authority and in accordance with the Government decision of June 1953, which authorized the defence minister to decide on retaliatory action. Lavon explained that the reprisal was essential to prevent the murder of Israelis in the future. He stressed the difficulties that faced those who conducted the operation, which sometimes constrained them to harm women and children.

Joseph Sapir backed Ben-Gurion's position.

Golda Meyerson supported the retaliatory operation. She noted the hypocrisy in the assumption that women and children must not be harmed, whereas it was all right to kill young men who were themselves fathers. Killing in itself was evil, she said. She regretted that Israel was forced to undertake reprisals to defend its citizens.

Peretz Naphtali supported continuing work in the north until the Security Council adopted a resolution. He deplored the Qibya operation, but admitted that sometimes such actions were necessary. He too criticized the decision-making procedures and stressed the danger inherent in a situation in which the defence minister and chief of staff could create facts without consulting other ministers. He proposed stipulating that consultations must be held before any such operation, at least with the foreign minister or with the Ministerial Committee on Defense. Naphtali opposed denying IDF involvement in the operation, since nobody would believe such a story.

Peretz Bernstein and Dov Joseph were opposed to stopping work in the north. Regarding Qibya, Dov Joseph said that Israel should express regret at the death of children and women, but emphasize in its statement that the Arabs had never expressed regret when Israeli women and children were killed.

Ben-Zion Dinur said that a statement should be issued on Qibya. He contended that the infiltration was organized under a single guiding hand. Israel must respond to this activity with orderly planning and thought. To

this end, the entire Government must be party to any decisions.

Joseph Serlin was critical of Shapira's moralizing; he supported the Qibya operation because the situation along the borders endangered the existence of the state. He agreed with Ben-Gurion that the IDF's role should not be disclosed, but also supported Sharett's proposal that Israel express regret at the death of women and children.

Sharett responded to the ministers' comments. He pointed out the blatant contradiction between Israel's dependence on the outside world and its political introversion. He warned his colleagues of a crisis threatening the country's very existence that would follow in the wake of a delay in the U.S. grant-in-aid. He was personally disappointed by his failure to persuade his colleagues to support his proposal. In such a case, a foreign minister ought to tender his resignation. Given the political situation, though, he had not considered such a step. He explained once again that suspending work on the Jordan River project would create a congenial atmosphere for the Security Council debate and improve relations between Israel and the United States in advance of that debate. Concerning Qibya, Sharett said that he had been informed of the planned reprisal immediately after the murder in Yahud (see No. 425) and had not opposed it at the time. However, after he had learned of the Mixed Armistice Commission's condemnation of Jordan (see No. 425, paragraph 3, and n. 4 there), he had contacted the Defence Minister and expressed his opposition to a retaliatory operation. Lavon had said that he would consider the matter. Sharett explained that he had not convened the Government because he had not imagined the scope of the operation. When he decided that he should convene the Government, the operation was already under way. Sharett again condemned the operation and noted the harm it had done to Israel's good name. By such an act, Israel had demonstrated that it too was capable of shedding innocent blood. The work in the north, the 'Auja affair, and the Qibya operation, he said, had opened several simultaneous fronts at the UN. He feared that Israel might gain the reputation of a reckless state.

The Government rejected Sharett's opinion and decided not to suspend work in the north. It also decided to lodge complaints with the Security Council against Arab violations of the armistice agreements and especially the series of murders perpetrated by Jordan, but not to lodge a complaint against Syrian interference with the work in the north. It also decided that the Prime Minister would prepare a Government statement on the situation along the borders and bring it to the Government for approval (see No. 449).

445. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (New York). 18 October 1953

Coded Tel.: 255; Inc.: 130.09/2339/1

(1) Sharett reports that, after a long and sharp debate, the Government resolved by a large majority not to cease work on the Benot-Yaaqov canal until instructed to do so by the Security Council, in which case it would reconsider the matter. The proposal to cease work immediately, in advance of the Security Council debate, or at least to issue an immediate announcement to this effect, was rejected. The majority believed that Israel would gain nothing from an immediate suspension of work, since it has already ignored Bennike's instructions. On the contrary, were it to stop now it would simply be admitting its past guilt. On the other hand, Israel would be showing respect for and deference to the Security Council if it ceases work when that body requests it to do so.[1]

(2) It was also decided to lodge a complaint with Security Council against the Arab countries, especially Jordan. The complaint should not mention grievances against Egypt, since it is not in Israel's interest to do anything detrimental to that country and because Egypt allowed the Parnon to pass through the Suez Canal.[2]

(3) The disagreement about the Jordan River, too, will be left out of the complaint. But Israel will inform the Security Council separately that, in light of the report submitted by the UNTSO Chief of Staff, it would welcome a review of the entire affair by the Security Council.[3]

Sharett concludes with encouragement for Eban in his efforts.

Notes

1. In response to the Government's decision, Eban cabled Sharett that he remained firm in his conviction and requested a review of the decision not to suspend work in the north. He believed that Israel would find it impossible to explain its stand to the UN General Assembly if it did not show some flexibility (telegram 659, 19 October 1953, 130.09/2310/4). Sharett replied that in view of the opinions voiced in the Government he saw very little chance of modifying the decision (telegram dated 20 October 1953, 130.09/2309/15).
2. See No. 367, and No. 368 and n. 4 there.
3. See No. 457.
4. See No. 449 (Editorial Note).

446. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 18 October 1953

Coded Tel.: MTA20; Inc.: 130.09/2377/1

Sharett cables Israel's version of the Qibya incident. "The border settlements, which have many weapons and ex-soldiers, lost their patience. They organized and carried out the assault on Qibya after the Jordanians had killed a woman and two children in Yahud—the last link in an unbroken chain of nighttime murders, shootings at vehicles, and other disturbances, without any serious attempt by the Jordanian government to control the situation along the frontier. The Government and Israeli public greatly regret that matters reached such a point, for which Jordan is to blame, and the loss of the lives of many innocent people." Sharett adds that the Government is about to issue a communiqué.[1]

Note

1. See No. 449 (Editorial Note).

447. Editorial Note

Submission of a French Note to the Foreign Minister, 19 October 1953

At noon on 19 October, the first secretary of the French embassy in Israel delivered the following note to the deputy chief of protocol in the Foreign Ministry, in Tel Aviv. During their meeting, the French diplomat stated that feelings were running high in his government on account of the raid and that he and the ambassador had expended considerable effort to tone down the wording of the note. "What really happened in Qibya?" he asked. (See Lotan to Eytan, 19 October 1953, 130.02/2440/1).

448. Note from P. E. Gilbert to M. Sharett. 19 October 1953

Notes

1. See No. 360.
2. See No. 426 (Editorial Note).

449. Editorial Note

The Prime Minister's Statement on the Qibya Action, Broadcast over the Radio on 19 October 1953

On the evening of 19 October, the Prime Minister delivered a statement on the Qibya operation on Israel Radio. The text printed below is the official English translation of the statement.

> For over four years, armed forces from Jordan and other Arab countries have been breaking into Jewish settlements close to the frontier and into Jerusalem to carry out robbery and murder. Hundreds of Israel citizens, men and women, old and young, have been killed or seriously wounded in the course of these years by armed gangs which have entered Israel mostly from Jordan and the Gaza Strip. All our appeals to Mixed Armistice Commissions and all our attempts to get the Arab Governments to put an end to these crimes proved fruitless. The Governments of Jordan and the other Arab countries have sponsored these actions directly and indirectly with the clear political object of undermining Israel and making the lives of its citizens impossible.
>
> To this end they exploited the Arab refugees, denied them homes in their countries and refused to help them settle down in the way that the Israel Government has helped Jewish refugees from Arab countries to find homes and a settled life anew, and as it also assisted displaced Arabs within Israel to achieve permanent settlement. The Arab Governments compelled Arab refugees to subsist on the charity of the United Nations and kept them deliberately in the vicinity of Israel's frontiers for these pernicious purposes.
>
> And now what has always been feared, has come about.
>
> Frontier settlements in Israel—mostly of Jewish refugees from Arab countries or survivors of Nazi concentration camps—for years formed the target of these murderous raids, but they exercised restraint. With every justification they called upon their Government to defend them. The Government of Israel responded by giving them arms and training them to defend themselves.
>
> The armed bands from Jordan persisted in their criminal attacks until the patience of some of these frontier settlements was exhausted. After a mother and her two children were killed in their sleep in the village of Yahud last week, they attacked the village of Kibya [*sic*] on the other side of the frontier, which was one of the main centers of these murderous gangs.
>
> Each one of us grieves [at] the shedding of blood wherever it may occur. No one deplores it more than does the Government of Israel if in a reprisal raid on Kibya innocent blood was spilled. But all responsibility rests with the Government of Jordan which for years has tolerated,

and thereby encouraged, acts of murder and pillage against the inhabitants of Israel.

The Government of Israel rejects with all vigor the absurd and fantastic allegation that 600 men of the Israel Defence Forces took part in the action against the village of Kibya. We have carried out a searching investigation and it is clear beyond doubt that not a single army unit was absent from its base on the night of the attack on Kibya. It is by no means the view of the Government of Israel that relations between neighbors should be based upon the acts of reprisal. But neither can this Government agree that such relations should be characterized by a continued and prolonged state of one-sided warfare. The rulers of the Arab states have publicly justified this kind of warfare and have persistently threatened a "second round."

The Government of Israel deems it a duty to declare before the entire civilized world and before its friends wherever they may be: we are small and a young state, and although we knew how to defend ourselves when we were attacked five years ago by the Arab states, we do not wish under any circumstances to base our relations with our neighbors on force or use of arms. As did all past Jewish generations, so we too have faith in the vision of peace of Israel's prophets, in the supremacy of justice and in equality between men and among peoples. The State of Israel was established in order to right an historic wrong—the ill-usage of the Jews of the world as individuals and as a people. Its principal purpose is to assure for every oppressed Jew, wherever he may be, a life of security, of freedom and equality, within his historic homeland, by right of his own people to independence and not on sufferance. This State will not agree—nor can any upright man agree—that the lives of its citizens go unprotected and that armed Arab marauders, albeit in small numbers for the present, should invade it day after day and week after week, to murder, sabotage and rob without let or hindrance from their Government, without penalty or any impediment on the part of the United Nations, and without any effective intervention on the part of the allies of some of the Arab states.

The Arab states, which upon the establishment of the State of Israel sought to destroy us by the force of their armies and failed, have been trying for five years to wreck our existence by economic blockade and boycott in violation of the United Nations Charter, and by guerrilla warfare in violation of armistice agreements.

We cannot reconcile ourselves to this one-sided warfare. We cannot conceive that the United Nations—or any power that believes sincerely in the Charter of the United Nations—would seek consciously to apply different standards in their judgment of the acts of violence which have been going on for the past five years along Israel's borders.

As an integral part of the peace-loving, civilized world, we do not wish that even a single person in neighboring countries should be need-

lessly harmed; but neither do we want citizens of our State [to be] murdered.

The Government of Israel is placing before the Security Council its representations concerning the violations by the Arab states of the armistice agreements and the Charter of the United Nations.

We place our trust in international peace and justice. We shall insist with firmness and resolution that the same laws and principles shall apply to the people of Israel as to other peoples, to the State of Israel as to other states.

450. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 19 October 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.04/2319/4

Eytan informs the missions that Israel has submitted a complaint to the Security Council, specifying: (1) its grievance against Jordan,[1] in particular for nonfulfillment of Article VIII and its violation of Articles III and IV of the armistice agreement, through acts of murder and theft; (2) its grievance against Arab countries for not taking measures to stop infiltration, their refusal to make peace, and their waging economic war in contravention of the armistice agreements, Security Council resolutions, and the United Nations charter.

Eytan instructs Israel's representatives to emphasize in their diplomatic talks that Israel has been proposing peace with the Arab countries for five years, but these offers have always been rejected. The situation along the borders is the result of this rejection. The armistice agreements were not intended to serve as a framework for a permanent peace, but only as interim arrangements until the advent of peace, for which Israel is always ready. If the Security Council debates lead to a vigorous demand for true peace in the Middle East, the effort will have been worthwhile. The information campaign must be as aggressive and vehement as possible. The opportunity should be exploited to condemn the true causes of the current situation.

Note

1. The note was submitted to the Security Council on 20 October. See No. 457.

451. R. Shiloah to the United States Division (telegram). 19 October 1953

Notes

1. See No. 438, n. 1.
2. On 18 October, the State Department issued a press release expressing profound sympathy for the families of those killed in the assault on the village of Qibya. The communiqué added that the shocking reports that had reached the State Department about losses in life and property during the incident had persuaded it that those responsible must be brought to justice and effective steps taken to prevent future incidents of this kind. (For the text of the communiqué, 18 October 1953, see 130.16/2949/4.)
3. See No. 452 and n. 2 there.
4. See Shiloah to Bendor (appendix), 22 October 1953, 93.08/357/49.

452. A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram). 20 October 1953

Notes

1. See No. 451.
2. The reference is to the regional plan for using the water of the Jordan and Yarmuk rivers for irrigation and hydroelectric power, known as the "Main plan" after the office in Boston (C. T. Main) that drafted it. The plan, prepared under the guidance of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) at the request of UNRWA, was published on 19 October 1953. It did not take political boundaries into account and dealt only with surface water in the Jordan basin, which it designated for irrigation in the Jordan Valley. One objective was to permit the resettlement of Arab refugees in Jordanian territory in the Jordan Valley. According to the plan, the Sea of Galilee would be a common regulatory reservoir, supplemented by two artificial lakes, one near the Yarmuk and the other on the Hatzbani River. The water would be allocated as follows: Jordan, 63.5%; Israel, 32.5%; Syria, 4%. The plan stipulated that UNRWA would bear the cost of development in Jordan, and the Israeli government would bear the cost of work in Israel. (See the Main Plan and the accompanying letter by Gordon Clapp; and cf. No. 463.)
3. See No. 370, n. 3.
4. See No. 436 and n. 2 there.
5. See Nos. 397 and 429.

453. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 20 October 1953

Outg.: 130.09/2319/4

Eytan instructs Israel's representatives, in their diplomatic contacts in the

various capitals and in the local press, to reject the assertions that have been or may be voiced about the nonpunishment of those involved in the Qibya reprisal. It should be stressed that the State of Israel lives in a state of siege, surrounded by enemies, and that its survival is always in jeopardy. It is making desperate efforts to continue development and to settle people in dangerous localities. Every morning it is confronted by the bloody harvest of the previous night. Any attempt to make scapegoats of those who went too far and committed this act of vengeance would meet with the wrath of the entire nation.

The people will not stand for the punishment of those of its children who day and night are the first to face the threat of murder in the name of the national interest. As to Britain's demand that Israel pay compensation for life and property, Israel is willing to do so on condition of reciprocity, that is, if Jordan commits itself to do likewise for all the acts of sabotage, theft, and murder committed from its territory.

Note

1. See the American communiqué on this issue, No. 451, n. 2.

454. Editorial Note

Dulles's Announcement at a Press Conference of a Deferment in the Grant-in-Aid to Israel, 20 October 1953

At a press conference on 20 October, Secretary of State Dulles gave the first official confirmation that the grant-in-aid to Israel was being deferred (see No. 389). Replying to a question, he said as follows:

> We are continuing, as I understand it, our so-called technical cooperation aid. As far as the allocation of funds is concerned, out of the amount which was made available by the last Mutual Security Act, there has been no allocation, as yet, to Israel, and we have deferred making that in view of the problems which exist in that area between the United Nations and Israel. The deferment of allocation was made at the time of the decision of General Bennike with reference to the water development of the Jordan. It was not based upon the more recent incidents.

He added the following reasons for the deferment:

> It was deferred because it seemed to us that the State of Israel should respect General Bennike's decision, and as long as the State of Israel was acting in defiance of that decision it was questionable at least as to

whether we should make the allocation . . . (*FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1369–71).

Dulles's statement was officially transmitted to the Israel Embassy in Washington. Compare the text of the statement as conveyed by the Embassy to the Foreign Minister, telegram 1009, 20 October 1953, 130.20/2486/1; see also telegram W566, 21 October 1953, 130.09/2310/4.

455. Sh. Divon (Paris) to the Western Europe Division. 20 October 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2345/2

Divon reports on a meeting with Laurent, who is filling in for de Courcelle and Mayer during their absence from Paris. Divon asked the French to insist that the Security Council debate not be restricted to the Qibya incident, but embrace the whole issue of Israel-Jordan relations. Laurent's reply conveyed the following information: (1) He agrees with Israel's position and will recommend that instructions in this vein be sent to the French representative at the United Nations. (2) When the Three-Power conference[1] discussed the Qibya affair, Dulles spoke harshly about Israel and asserted that his talks with Eban had not prevented the incident. (3) Eden was extremely forceful. Bidault was the least emotional. (4) Telegrams from Arab capitals report severe anti-Israel tension, but the French do not foresee a flare-up of military activity, because of Arab fears and lack of cohesion. (5) He noted the importance of the editorial in *Le Monde*, which addressed the entire problem and evinced understanding of Israel's difficulties.

Notes

1. The conference of the three Western foreign ministers, which convened in London in mid-October to discuss pending international problems.
2. Compare No. 472.

456. A. Eban (New York) to M. Sharett. 20 October 1953

Coded Tel.: 66; Inc.: 130.09/2331/2

Replying to Sharett's telegram,[1] Eban reports that he found renewed enthusiasm and dedication among Jewish leaders in the United States. Meet-

ings this week include Proskauer-Dulles, Silver-Eisenhower, Lazarus-Dulles, Blaustein-Byroade, and others. The American press has exhibited exemplary restraint and a lenient attitude. On the other hand, Jewish leaders and Christian friends are conducting an angry reckoning in private talks with Eban over the Qibya incident, from both the moral viewpoint and the perspective of international discretion and possible repercussions for Israel's security and status. Eban adds that Silver's criticism was extremely harsh.

Eban reports that Byroade told Blaustein that he tends to believe it preferable not to have the Security Council pass a resolution but rather to allow UN members to express their opinions orally. Although this seemed to reflect a favorable attitude, in the course of the meeting it became evident that Byroade is more concerned for the Arabs than for Israel. He fears that a resolution might recommend direct peace negotiations and complicate matters for the Arabs.

Eban hopes that, despite the serious situation, this round will end on a positive note. Even if the struggle is ultimately successful, though, he will not change his opinion as to the folly of the Qibya incident and the need for a severe accounting over the loss of control.

Notes

1. Sharett cabled Eban as follows: "I welcome the fighting spirit of your recent telegrams. We have no alternative but to counterattack and fight courageously. Who knows—perhaps some good will come of it in the end" ([19] October 1953, 130.09/2339/1).
2. See No. 454 (Editorial Note).

457. Note from A. Eban to the President of the Security Council. 20 October 1953

458. V. Bennike to M. Sharett. 20 October 1953

Notes

1. See No. 387.
2. See No. 381 (appendix).
3. See No. 397.
4. See No. 429.
5. See Vol. 6, Editorial Note, Main Volume, pp. 327–29, Companion Volume, p. 140.

459. A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram). 21 October 1953

Note

1. See No. 376, n. 1.

460. A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram). 21 October 1953

Notes

1. Eban is replying to Sharett's telegram, in which he had written that "Dulles's announcement concerning the delay in the grant must serve as an additional impediment to retreating on the issue of suspending work" at the Benot-Yaaqov Bridge (telegram TNW262, 21 October 1953, 130.09/2339/1). For Dulles's announcement, see No. 454 (Editorial Note).
2. Harold Riegelman.
3. See No. 452 and n. 2 there.

461. M. Sharett to Sir Francis Evans. 21 October 1953

Notes

1. See No. 433.
2. See No. 449 (Editorial Note).

462. D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to the Israel Delegation to the United Nations. 22 October 1953

Coded Tel.: 267; Outg.: 130.09/2339/1

Ben-Gurion informs Eban of Arab Legion preparations to overrun Mt. Scopus, apparently at dawn. He also notifies him that the Syrian army has been on the alert for five days and deployed, except for one brigade, along the border with Iraq.[1]

Note

1. Responding to the telegram, Eban asked how Israel would react to an attempt to seize Mt. Scopus. Had Israel again warned the Americans and British about the re-

newed threat? Would it not be a good idea to raise the issue in the Security Council? (telegram 993, 22 October 1953, 130.09/2331/2).

463. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 23 October 1953

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2377/1

Sharett instructs the mission heads on how to explain Israel's position on the water plan put forward by UNRWA, with State Department approval:[1] (1) It must be made clear that the plan would deprive Israel of half or more of the Jordan's waters, which would be used for irrigation in Transjordan and Syria, thereby putting an end to agricultural development in the Negev. Israel would be prepared to concede some of the Jordan's waters if it received compensation from the Litani, which flows unused into the Mediterranean, but the proposal totally overlooks that river. (2) The State Department's fervent support of Bennike's opposition to continuing work on the Benot-Yaaqov canal evidently stems from the wish to promote the UNRWA plan or at least to remove an obstacle in its way. Sharett explains that the Benot-Yaaqov canal, in the initial stage, is a free-standing hydroelectric project to replace Naharayim; in the long term, however, it is meant to be incorporated into the Bet Netofa project for diverting the Jordan River to the Negev. Although this is confidential information, the Americans are well aware of the project's ultimate objective, which is liable to lead to serious confrontations. (3) Bennike's opposition and all his arguments about land and water rights and strategic advantages may be only a front for the State Department, which has been manipulating him all along. (4) The danger of the UNRWA proposal is that it could prevent realization of Israel's plan and condemn it to economic paralysis and atrophy without advancing towards a regional water settlement, since the Arabs in any case will not agree to be partners in an accord with Israel or to become agriculturally dependent on water sources and reservoirs inside Israel. (5) Israel's present policy is to denounce the substance of the plan and declare that Israel will insist on its full rights and the supply of all its needs, but not to reject the plan outright—both in order to avoid the impression of rejecting a regional settlement and to allow the Arabs to be the first to refuse.

Note

1. See No. 452 and n. 2 there.

464. G. Rafael (New York) to M. Sharett. 23 October 1953

Orig.: 130.02/2382/22

Rafael reports his first impressions from his activities in New York. Many articles unfriendly to Israel are appearing each day in the American press. Because of the lack of an official Israeli statement during the first days following the Qibya incident, the Arab version of events penetrated the public mind, which now firmly believes that the operation was the result of a deliberate decision by the Government of Israel implemented by the IDF. All later explanations by Israel have failed to convince.

Dulles's announcement of the postponement of the grant[1] was greeted with mixed feelings, since many Americans do not want the Administration to use economic aid to friendly countries as a political tool. Rafael gained the impression that the freezing of the grant may unite the Jewish community, which views this impulsive act as an affront. Eban and the Israeli diplomatic corps are doing their best to instill the Jews with a fighting spirit. There are already signs that the State Department has begun to take notice. The reaction by the Government spokesman in Jerusalem, to the effect that Israel will not grovel, has made a positive impression and testified to national pride.

Rafael believes that Embassy staff are depressed by the blow they suffered as a result of recent events in Israel, especially because they were not provided with advance warning of the gravity of the situation and its repercussions. Eban had been working under the justified impression that Israel's policy for the coming year was to achieve a diplomatic breathing spell in the area of Arab-Israel relations, in the hope of improving the situation and because of the need to stabilize relations with the United States. At the General Assembly, Israel-related issues had been limited to a debate on the refugees. Now, overnight, Israel has become the major topic on the agenda. Rafael believes that the diplomats' hesitations are over; they realize that they must enter the lists in this new arena. Rafael is convinced that Eban and his staff will put all their energy into this struggle.

Rafael and Dayan surveyed the situation for the UN delegation. Rafael and some members of the delegation were surprised by the content of Dayan's review and by several emphatic statements of his, including: (1) No one in Israel would dare come out in favor of stopping work on the Benot-Yaaqov canal. (2) The Qibya operation was carried out with the prior knowledge of the Foreign Minister; Dayan did not know whether the Foreign Minister had opposed it. (3) After the operation, the Prime Minister expressed satisfaction at its successful outcome. (4) The Prime Minister believes that border disputes may reach a point where war is inevitable. (5) The retaliatory strikes may well lead to further infiltrations into Israeli communities, like the Yahud incident;[2] these will in turn pro-

voke reprisals by Israel.

Rafael did not wish to make an issue of Dayan's remarks and contented himself with a short statement to the effect that the Foreign Minister had expressed his opposition to the Qibya operation.

From Eban's meetings with Security Council delegates, which Rafael attended, he concludes that their main concern is not the Qibya incident but rather the steadily deteriorating security situation, which is liable to lead to a general flare-up in the Middle East. On the other hand, the Powers are not prepared to draw the appropriate conclusions from the worsening situation and press the Arabs to meet their commitments under the armistice agreements and the UN resolution calling for the parties to progress towards a permanent solution. In their meetings, Eban and Rafael explained that the basic difference between Israel and the Arabs is that Israel views the armistice agreement as merely a stage on the road to peace, whereas the Arabs interpret it as a continuation of the war by other means. This explanation made some impression. They also pointed to the great restraint shown by Israel, which could have reacted far more harshly to Arab provocations.

The Arabs are doing their utmost to focus attention on the Qibya incident. Hence the Syrians have expressed a wish to postpone, for the time being, the debate on the Benot-Yaaqov canal. The Arabs fear that the Security Council might renew its demand for a peace accord.

Notes

1. See No. 426 (Editorial Note).
2. See No. 454 (Editorial Note).
3. See No. 444 (Editorial Note). Compare M. Sharett, *Personal Diary,* Vol. 1, pp. 49–51.
4. See No. 425, n. 3.
5. See No. 425.
6. See No. 457.
7. See No. 452 and n. 2 there, and No. 463.
8. See No. 436 and n. 2 there.

465. A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram). 23 October 1953

Notes

1. See Nos. 389, 391, and 454 (Editorial Note).
2. Dulles was under pressure from Republican leaders because of the New York City election campaign being conducted then (see telegram from the mission in New York to Elath, 29 October 1953, 93.04/40/19).
3. Compare No. 468.

466. D. Shaltiel (Rio de Janeiro) to W. Eytan. 23 October 1953

Orig.: 130.02/2443/10

Shaltiel reports on his meeting with Leitão da Cunha, director of the Political Division and deputy secretary-general of the Brazilian Foreign Ministry, to discuss Fabrino's proposal.[1] Da Cunha related, in utmost confidence, that the Brazilian ambassadors in Washington and London have been informed of the Fabrino-Tardini proposal and instructed to make discreet inquiries as to the positions of the British and American governments. The ambassadors were told that this is not a concrete proposal, only preliminary explorations, that the initiative was Fabrino's, and that Brazil has no information as to Israel's stand on the matter. It may be assumed that in the coming days the Brazilian ambassador in Washington will raise the issue at the State Department.[2]

Da Cunha added that his government attaches extreme importance to the matter and would be delighted to be able to contribute to the solution of this complex problem. The fact that it is a large Catholic state that has no direct interest in the Middle East and maintains good relations with both Israel and the Arab countries enables it to mediate between them. He added that the Brazilian foreign minister is following the situation closely and is willing to use the Ministry's good offices to help achieve a compromise between Israel and the Vatican.

The president of Brazil also supports the idea of mediation by his country, hoping thereby to increase his prestige both at home and abroad. Shaltiel was impressed by da Cunha's statement that Brazil wishes to play an active role in the international arena, and an effort to mediate between Israel and the Vatican can serve this objective.

Da Cunha analyzed the Jerusalem situation as follows: Recognition of Jerusalem is to be equated with the attitude towards China. Logic dictates recognition of Communist China, but many countries, disregarding logic and political advantage, are refusing to recognize Mao. The same applies to Jerusalem: it is, in fact, Israel's capital; but the existence of the UN internationalization resolution and the Vatican's unwillingness to accept the facts has led many UN member states to refuse to give legal endorsement to the *de facto* situation. It is in Israel's interest to change the situation. It would reap considerable benefit should various countries recognize Jerusalem *de jure* as the capital of Israel. For this to happen, though, the obstacle of internationalization and the Vatican's opposition must be removed. Brazil is prepared to serve Israel to this end.

As far as Fabrino's proposal is concerned, da Cunha said that he had acted on his own initiative and out of friendship for Israel. Da Cunha

pointed out to Tardini that his initiative did not commit the Brazilian government and that he did not know Israel's position. He believes that the proposal has shortcomings but rests on a sound basis. Its point of departure is the assumption that a way must be found to assuage the justified fears of the Catholic world and the Vatican about the safety of the Holy Places. Demilitarization could serve as a calming factor. Israel's acceptance of demilitarization would prove the sincerity of its desire to reach a satisfactory solution with the Vatican. Da Cunha added that he knew that Sharett's proposal to institute international supervision of the Holy Places is not acceptable to the Vatican and cannot serve as a basis for negotiations. At this stage, it is still too early to go into the details of implementing demilitarization. In any case, the Brazilians are well aware that Fabrino's original idea of demilitarizing an area of fifty square kilometers is untenable. Demilitarization does not imply that Israel abdicate its sovereignty over New Jerusalem while retaining administrative authority. Were the plan implemented, the Jordanians and Israelis would be obliged to evacuate their armed forces from the demilitarized area.

After the Jordanian army had left Jerusalem it would be easier to resurrect the proposal to internationalize the Old City. In da Cunha's opinion, since there are hardly any Holy Places in New Jerusalem, it makes sense to limit internationalization to the Old City. He believes there is a chance that the Vatican can be won over to this idea. There remains the problem of Arab opposition; but if the Vatican gives its imprimatur to the proposal and the Western Powers agree, a Latin-American and Western bloc at the United Nations would outvote the Arabs. Thus, Israel could remove two obstacles at the same time, since a concession on the demilitarization issue would reduce tensions with the Vatican, remove the Jordanian army from the Old City, and make it possible to effect internationalization without harming Israeli interests.

As for Holy Places inside Israel, Israel should agree to their extraterritorialization as a gesture of good faith. Such a step would help Israel-Vatican relations. In exchange for these concessions, Jerusalem would be recognized *de jure* as the capital of Israel.

Shaltiel asked whether the Vatican is at all prepared to recognize the political independence of the Jewish people in its land. Does this not contradict the dogmas of the Catholic Church? Da Cunha replied that he could not offer an opinion on the subject, since the Brazilians have not yet approached Rome and do not know the Vatican's position.

Finally, da Cunha asked whether Israel would agree for Brazil to propose such a plan in general outline as a basis for negotiations, with Israel reserving the right to oppose certain particulars thereof. If Israel agrees, the new Brazilian ambassador to the Vatican will be instructed to approach the Vatican secretary of state and learn his reaction to the proposal. Since da Cunha does not wish to embroil the new ambassador in a needless adven-

ture, he will not instruct him to act until Israel informs him of its position. An Israeli rejection of the plan would not affect its relations with Brazil. If Israel agrees, however, it stands to gain even if the plan is never realized, since it would have proven to those in the know that it is willing to make concessions in the search for a just and lasting solution.

Da Cunha asked for a speedy reply from Israel. Hence Shaltiel requested that instructions be cabled from Jerusalem.[3] He takes this opportunity to voice his displeasure that he has not been cabled the Ministry's response to his previous reports, despite his request.[4]

Notes

1. See No. 385, n. 1.
2. See *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, No. 702, and n. 3 there.
3. Shaltiel's letter was not discussed in the Foreign Ministry until 12 November. Instructions were sent to him several days later. At the consultation it was decided that continued contact with da Cunha would be in line with the Foreign Ministry's general policy of maintaining contact on the Jerusalem issue with peripheral countries of the international Catholic community and attempting to weaken their commitment to the Vatican's position on this question. It was also decided that Israel should not rush into a total and *a priori* rejection of the proposal to demilitarize Jerusalem; it should wait on this matter until it became clear what line the United States would adopt after the General Assembly. The possibility was raised that Brazil was being manipulated behind the scenes by the Vatican, which was seeking a tactical advantage through Israel's very agreement to the principle of demilitarization, perhaps as the first step towards internationalization. In light of these considerations, it was decided to instruct Shaltiel to continue his contacts with da Cunha and to inform him that the Foreign Ministry viewed with great satisfaction Brazil's interest in seeking a solution to the issue of Jerusalem and a way to remove obstacles to good relations between Israel and the Vatican. Shaltiel should suggest to da Cunha that Brazil be instrumental in getting Israel and Jordan to sign a convention guaranteeing the absolute immunity of the Holy Places in the event of riots or war. (See J. Herzog to Shaltiel, 17 November 1953, 130.02/2443/10; see also Herzog's previous letter, 1 November 1953, ibid., and Eytan's telegram to the mission in Rio de Janeiro, 16 November 1953, 130.09/2360/1.) See also No. 562.
4. On this matter, see Eytan's telegram to the Israel Mission in Rio de Janeiro, 26 October 1953, 130.09/2360/1.

467. M. Dayan (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 23 October 1953

Coded Tel.: 999; Inc.: 130.09/2331/2

Dayan reports through the Ministry to the Chief of Staff on the following:

(1) His talk with Bunche, who was extremely cordial and very critical of the State Department: Bunche confirmed Israel's assessment of Byroade's and Dulles's flawed and irresponsible approach to Near Eastern affairs. Bunche expressed willingness to help convey a correct interpretation of what is involved in diverting the Jordan and of border security, but asserted that he has no contact with Byroade and Dulles and they pay no heed to his opinion. In any case, he agreed to help to the best of his ability.

(2) Eban's talk with Byroade:[1] Dayan adds that at his suggestion the Israel delegation to the United Nations accepted a formula for an agreement with the Americans, which he recommends that the Government approve. The formula is as follows: (a) In view of Israel's promise to suspend work on the canal for the duration of the Security Council debate, in accordance with the Council's request, the Americans will release the grant as soon as the Council convenes. (b) The Security Council will state that the temporary work stoppage was ordered to permit a free discussion within the Council. (c) Continuation of the work and any limitations to be placed on the project must be raised with the Americans. (d) During the stoppage, work will continue outside the demilitarized zone.

Dayan lists the reasons that had led him to draft this proposal: (1) The importance of drawing a line between the American sanctions and the Security Council resolution. (2) It is preferable that the grant be renewed before the Council debates rather than after a resolution is passed. (3) The Security Council has no choice but to demand a suspension of work for the duration of the debate, to safeguard the prestige of the United Nations, with no bearing on the rights and wrongs of the matter under discussion. Should Israel refuse to comply with the Council's call to cease work at the start of the debate, it would guarantee an unfavorable outcome. (4) There is a chance that the Council will adopt a resolution allowing Israel some leeway to continue work if it complies with the Council's request at the start of the debate.

Dayan concludes that the State Department went too far. If Israel stands firm it will find a way out of the impasse.

Notes

1. See No. 465.
2. Two words are missing in the original.
3. Several words are missing in the original.
4. See No. 452 and n. 2 there.

468. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 24 October 1953

Coded Tel.: 675; Inc.: 130.09/2310/4

Eban reports that, after his talk with Byroade,[1] the latter met with Proskauer and informed him of the gist of the talk. He told him frankly that Dulles had sent him to New York on a special mission to ease the Jewish pressure on him and find a face-saving solution that would permit him to renew the economic aid. Byroade's consultations at the United Nations were merely a front for his meetings with Eban and Proskauer. Byroade asked Proskauer about the two proposed measures: (1) a statement by Dulles; (2) a temporary halt of work on the canal in deference to the Security Council. Byroade showed the draft statement to Proskauer, who thought it deplorable. In its effort to apologize for the suspension of aid the State Department was merely adding insult to injury. Proskauer said that such a statement would worsen Dulles's predicament rather than alleviate it. Were the statement made public in its current version, he would wash his hands of the entire matter. Byroade, startled, requested that release of the statement be postponed until after his return to Washington. Meanwhile, Byroade and Proskauer worked on a new draft. Proskauer advised Byroade not to publish a statement at all, saying that he could not promise that a declaration of this kind would achieve the desired goal of calming the storm in the Jewish community. Byroade agreed, but argued that Dulles was already up to his neck in the issue and would be unable to turn his attention to any other matter until the torrent of domestic criticism against him had ceased. He is most anxious to demonstrate that he had not been motivated by antisemitism. Byroade went on to tell Proskauer about his talk with Eban and the proposal for a temporary cessation of work as Israel's favorable response to a politely worded request by the Security Council, with the goal of lightening the atmosphere of the Council's proceedings. He asked Proskauer to impress upon Eban the importance of persuading the Government of Israel to agree to this step, which, in his opinion, would redeem the honor of Israel, the United States, and the United Nations. He hinted that Israeli compliance would influence the American position on the project as a whole and create a more cordial atmosphere for further discussions. Byroade reiterated the Administration's promise to release the grant immediately after the proposed step, without taking into consideration the repercussions of the Qibya incident and despite the fact that this would anger the Arabs.

To Proskauer's question as to whether Eban had requested renewal of the grant, Byroade retorted that it was Dulles, not Eban, who needed to have the appropriation reinstated. That was why he had been working on this matter the entire day.

Proskauer told Byroade that, as far as he knew, Israel does not oppose a

temporary stoppage if this would not affect the fate of the enterprise or compromise its basic principles. He was prepared to recommend that Israel accept the proposal for the sake of Israel–United States relations.

When he reported on this conversation to Eban, Proskauer added his fervent wish that Israel seize this opportunity to repair its relations with the United States. In his opinion, the proposal itself constitutes an important victory for Israel. He added that Byroade had admitted that the Administration now perceives the suspension of the grant as a mistake, and he bears personal responsibility for this matter vis-à-vis Dulles.

In a separate telegram, Eban conveyed the Israeli delegation's reaction to the proposal.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 465.
2. One word is missing in the original Hebrew. Perhaps it should be "the assumption" (that Syria must agree to continuation of the work), in accordance with the telegram from the New York mission to Elath, 29 October 1953, 93.04/40/19.
3. In this telegram, Eban informed Sharett of the unanimous decision by the UN delegation to recommend that the Government avail itself of the way out raised in the meetings with Byroade: attempting to have Dayan's suggestion about release of the grant money before the convening of the Security Council incorporated into Byroade's proposed solution. Eban presented the arguments supporting the recommendation (telegram TA676, 24 October 1953, 130.09/2310/4). For the Government's decision, see No. 473 (Editorial Note).

469. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. (24 October 1953)

Coded Tel.: 679; Inc.: 130.09/2310/14

The telegram was also sent to Ben-Gurion.

Eban calls the attention of Sharett and Ben-Gurion to the contradiction becoming evident in the actions of Israel's friends in America. On the one hand, they are demonstrating their friendship and devoting themselves generously to activities on behalf of Israel in this critical hour. On the other hand, they do this with a great show of displeasure in the wake of the Qibya atrocity, which reflected Israel's inability to attune its actions to the UN's notions of probity, and openly express their lack of confidence in Israel's political wisdom and policies. The American Association for the United Nations, which has supported Israel in all its campaigns since 1947 and continues to do so now, informed the Israeli UN delegation of its concern at Israel's defiance of the United Nations. The Association called on Israel to suspend work on the canal, not for Dulles's sake but for that of

the United Nations.

Eban adds that he tensely awaits a decision from Israel. He and members of the UN delegation are unanimous in their support for the solution proposed by Byroade, with the proviso that the suspension of work apply to the demilitarized zone only.

Notes

1. See No. 452 and n. 2 there.
2. The reference is to Moshe Dayan, Gideon Rafael, and Yosef Tekoah, who had come to reinforce the delegation in New York.
3. See No. 468 and n. 3 there.

470. E. Najar (New York) to W. Eytan. 24 October 1953

Coded Tel.: 1000; Inc.: 130.09/2331/2

In light of Najar's talks with members of the French delegation to the UN and after his discussion of the issue with Eban, the two of them propose intensive efforts in both Israel and Paris to encourage the French to demonstrate their support of Israel in practical terms, especially after Israel's effective assistance to France in the matter of North Africa. Meanwhile, the attitude of the French is as follows: (1) They openly declared that they have no intention of appeasing the Arabs at Israel's expense. (2) Their policy differs from that of Great Britain and the United States; this difference will be reflected in the debate. (3) They believe that a condemnation of Israel for the Qibya incident cannot be avoided, but will attempt to give the resolution a more balanced interpretation. (4) They believe that confirmation of Bennike's order for a suspension of work is inevitable, but efforts should be made to ensure that the stoppage does not predetermine the outcome of the discussions and the final resolution. (5) They promised they would demand fair treatment for Israel in the Tripartite discussions.

Eban will be meeting with Maurice Schumann.

471. J. Tsur (Paris) to W. Eytan. 25 October 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.02/2440/3

Tsur summarizes French reactions to recent developments, on the basis of talks conducted by himself and the Embassy staff:[1] (1) The reaction in the press has been moderate and bearable, on the whole, but there is some un-

ease among pro-Israeli journalists and politicians, due to the negative impression created by the scope of the Qibya incident. Even if these circles accept the Israeli argument they cannot justify the killing and regret the limited condemnation in official Israeli communiqués. (2) Israel's imbroglio with the United States could lessen Israel's influence in France, too, since heretofore it was believed that America supports Israel. This is one of the basic elements of Israeli influence here. It is unlikely that the French government could withstand any American pressure against Israel. (3) Despite the understanding and common interests, the opinion that Israel is the aggressive element in the Near East is gaining ground. Hence it is important to avoid, in the immediate future, any new incident that might reinforce this view. (4) French Jews are becoming aware of the danger faced by Israel. There is growing recognition that their fate is linked to that of Israel. This might lead to a wave of commitment to Israel, but one cannot count on the support of more distant circles should matters not go in Israel's favor. (5) The delay in presenting an official version worked to Israel's detriment. There is a discernible weakness in information efforts intended for foreign consumption; in particular, more serious handling of agency and newspaper correspondents resident in Israel is required.

Notes

1. It was around this time that Jacob Tsur took up his post as Israel's ambassador in Paris.
2. See No. 426 (Editorial Note).

472. Sh. Divon (Paris) to the Western Europe Division. 25 October 1953

Coded Tel; Inc.: 130.09/2345/2

Divon reports on a talk with de Margerie, who participated in the London conference along with Bidault: (1) De Margerie believes that Dulles's anti-Israel outburst in London[1] must be viewed in the context of the consolidation of a moderate pro-Arab line and anti-Israeli tendencies in the State Department. The American government, too, has gained the impression of late that Israel turns a deaf ear and makes light of matters to which the Americans attach importance and even prefers a policy of creating *faits accomplis*. Some fear that Israel is interested in a crisis in the Middle East. State Department officials claim that they are acting with the full knowledge of the White House and believe that in the aftermath of the Qibya incident it will be difficult for Israel to mobilize public opinion against them.

Hence de Margerie believes that Israel should show restraint in the coming days and even reiterate, at opportune moments, expressions of regret over the Qibya incident. The deterioration in relations with the United States is harmful to Israel's international standing and prestige and works to the Arabs' advantage.

(2) The British are worried by the anti-British sentiment that has arisen in Jordan and the pressure to deploy the Arab Legion. They are working to prevent implementation of the pact with Jordan.

(3) Telegrams from Arab capitals corroborate de Margerie's assumption that a Middle East flare-up is not in the cards.

(4) De Margerie agrees that the entire matter must be discussed in the Security Council. He added that Hoppenot[2] is working to this end.

(5) He agrees that the Security Council should demand that the parties initiate direct peace negotiation, though he is not sure what the American position would be on this.

Notes

1. See No. 455 and n. 1 there.
2. At the conference of the three Western foreign ministers, Dulles expressed anger with Israel for carrying out the Qibya operation despite his talks with Eban. (See telegram from Foreign Ministry to the missions in London and New York, 24 October 1953, 130.09/2330/20.)
3. Following the heart attack suffered by the Saudi Arabian king on 9 October. Ibn Saud died on 9 November.
4. At their meeting, Broustrat confirmed the information in the two last paragraphs of the telegram and added that the French would try to back away from the extreme American position. With relation to Syria, they would support Bennike's decision to suspend work, but would discuss the substance of the dispute in its own right (Divon's telegram to the Western Europe Division, 26 October 1953, 130.09/2345/2).

473. Editorial Note

Government Meeting to Discuss Suspending Work in the Area of the Benot-Yaaqov Bridge, 25 October 1953

Sharett reported on the UNRWA water project (see No. 463), on the anticipated mission by Johnston (see No. 436 and n. 2 there), on the recent developments in Washington in the wake of Dulles's announcement of a deferment of the grant-in-aid (see No. 454), on the political activity by Israel's representatives and leading American Jews on this matter (see Nos. 464, 465, 468, and 469), and on the proposal put forward by Dayan and the Israel Mission to the UN to escape the diplomatic imbroglio by means of

an Israeli agreement to suspend work at the Benot-Yaaqov Bridge for the duration of the UN Security Council debate if the State Department released the grant-in-aid before the Council convened (see No. 467).

Most of the ministers did not support Dayan's proposal and it was rejected. The majority favored a temporary suspension of work in response to an appeal by the Security Council. Golda Meyerson proposed deferring a decision until after the Security Council had convened.

After a discussion, the Government resolved as follows: (1) to inform Eban that he was authorized to agree should the president of the Security Council or the full Council politely request Israel to suspend work to permit the Council to investigate the issue in a relaxed atmosphere; (2) in addition, Eban was instructed (a) to gain as much time as possible; (b) to try to obtain a U.S. commitment to adopt a position on the Jordan River project similar to its stance on the Hula project.

474. Israel Embassy in Washington to the United States Division. 26 October 1953

Coded Tel.: 687; Inc.: 130.09/2314/4

The delegation of Jewish leaders introduced to Dulles[1] by Sen. Ives protested the suspension of the grant and emphasized the following: (1) the Administration's double standard towards Israel, contrasted with its leniency towards the Arabs; (2) the political folly of the attempt to appease the Arabs at Israel's expense; (3) the immorality of American identification with Arab efforts to strangle Israel's economy; (4) the State Department's silence in the face of the Arab states' discrimination against American citizens of the Jewish faith.

Dulles replied as follows: (1) During his visit to the Middle East he became convinced that there is no prospect for peace between Israel and its neighbors in the near future. (2) It is to Israel's benefit that the United States bolster its influence in the Arab countries by removing the impression that it favors Israel. (3) Israel keeps presenting the United States with *faits accomplis*; this is inappropriate in relations between friendly countries. (4) The grant had not been suspended, but simply not approved, and this, too, only after various sources had informed the Administration that war between Syria and Israel was liable to break out any minute. (5) Middle East oil is of the utmost importance to the West. (6) The truth of the matter is that the Arabs have not received any grant.

Dulles added bitterly that he finds himself under enormous pressure despite his favorable attitude towards Israel and his assistance in the past. As the talk drew to a close, he proposed issuing a joint communiqué delineat-

ing the sequence of events from the State Department's point of view and concluding with the hope for cordial relations between Israel and the United States.

The delegation rejected this proposal outright and submitted a draft communiqué it had prepared before the meeting. The draft did not meet with Dulles's approval. He was particularly opposed to the paragraph that referred to a double standard on the Suez issue. The paragraph was deleted and the communiqué issued without it.

Meanwhile, personal pressure on Dulles is being increasingly exerted by influential congressman and senators from both parties.

Note

1. Cf. the report on the meeting, co-chaired by Sen. Ives and Congressman Javits, held on 26 October, in *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1384–87.

475. Editorial Note

Security Council Meeting on the Palestine Question, 27 October 1953

On 27 October, the Security Council held three meetings on the Palestine issue. Two of these dealt with the Syrian complaint against Israel's work in the demilitarized zone, in the area of the Benot-Yaaqov Bridge. At the other meeting, Bennike reported on the Qibya incident.

In the first meeting, the Pakistani delegate presented a draft resolution calling on Israel to suspend work in the demilitarized zone as long as the subject was being discussed by the Security Council. The demand for a suspension was based on Bennike's request to Israel of 23 September (see No. 381). The British representative, who chaired the meeting, argued that the proposal amounted to rendering a verdict before the Council had heard the arguments of the two sides. He proposed a different wording, to the effect that work be suspended to assist the Security Council in its discussions. After a short deliberation, in which Abba Eban also participated, it was decided to adjourn the meeting for consultations and to reconvene later.

Meanwhile, another session was held, at which Bennike gave a detailed report on the Qibya operation (see No. 426) and the causes of the deterioration of the situation along the Israel-Jordanian border. The report made it plain that Israeli military forces had carried out the operation.

In the third session of that day, Eban notified the Council that the Government of Israel was prepared to suspend work in the demilitarized zone to facilitate the Security Council discussion (see Nos. 472 and 476). The

French representative expressed his government's satisfaction and said that there was no further need to discuss the Pakistani draft. He submitted his own draft proposal (S/8213), which was approved by the Council. It read as follows:

> The Security Council,
> *Having taken note* of the report of the Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision Organization dated 23 October 1953 (S/2122);
> *Desirous* of facilitating the consideration of the question without however prejudicing the rights, claims or positions of the parties concerned;
> *Deems* it desirable to that end that the works started in the Demilitarized Zone on 2 September 1953 should be suspended during the urgent examination of the question by the Security Council;
> *Notes* with satisfaction the statement made by the Israel representative at the 631st Security Council meeting regarding the undertaking given by his Government to suspend the works in question during that examination;
> *Requests* the Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision Organization to inform it regarding the fulfillment of that undertaking.
> (*Yearbook of the United Nations*, 1953, pp. 215–17 and 224–25)

476. A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram). 27 October 1953

Notes

1. See No. 475 (Editorial Note).
2. Work in the north was officially suspended at midnight on 28 October. In fact, work continued on sealing the dam, which it had been impossible to complete before that date. See Sharett to Eban, telegram 514, 30 October 1953, 130.09/2330/20.

477. E. Ben-Horin (Washington) to R. Shiloah (Washington). 28 October 1953

Copy: 93.03/3007/5

Ben-Horin makes a number of observations on the situation that is likely to develop after the current crisis ends:

(1) It is to be assumed that incidents of infiltration and murder by Arabs along the Jordanian border will not cease.

(2) Dayan and the others who came to Washington had implied that, should this eventuate, large-scale retaliatory actions are likely to be repeated.

(3) Given the political climate in America, it cannot be assumed that

Israel will find understanding in Washington should incidents such as Qibya recur. The Government must be prepared for such a development and understand that it will face extremely dire international consequences in such cases.

(4) Even though world public opinion and the Powers would not allow Israel to escape scot-free from another incident of this kind, there is growing recognition that Israel cannot stand by passively while security along its borders is being systematically and constantly undermined.

(5) Ben-Horin assumes that world opinion will understand Israel if, after a serious border incident with Jordan, it presents the latter with an ultimatum demanding the immediate apprehension of the guilty parties and the immediate conclusion of a stable agreement. An ultimatum of this nature must be delivered by the highest political authority.

(6) Ben-Horin proposes that the Government undertake a thorough review of the situation on the basis of his assessments and of Eban's and Shiloah's evaluations of the repercussions of the Qibya incident.

478. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassies in Washington, London, and Paris. 28 October 1953

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2345/3

Johnston,[1] Russell, and Fried met with Sharett, Eytan, and Bendor at Sharett's residence. Johnston raised the following main points:

(1) President Eisenhower is concerned by the military situation in the Middle East and would like to see an easing of tensions.

(2) There is no chance for a comprehensive settlement. Individual issues must be solved in the hope that over time this will lead to a rapprochement between the parties.

(3) One factor producing tension is utilization of the Jordan River. Efforts must be made to ensure maximum use of its water to the benefit of all parties. The draft plan[2] is subject to change. For now Johnston is merely asking for agreement in principle to the proposal.

(4) Another factor contributing to tension is the refugee problem. His proposal makes provision for the resettlement of many refugees.

(5) Since direct negotiations are not in the cards, a UN- or U.S.-sponsored or a neutral water authority must be set up to conclude agreements with each country separately on the division of the water. This authority must have the power to ensure that the agreed-upon allotments are respected. What is most important is to determine each country's allocation of water, not its use or final destination within the country.

(6) The United States is prepared to bear all costs, except for the con-

struction of power plants, which should be a matter for private initiative or assistance by an international bank.

(7) For technical reasons and political considerations, at this stage the Americans are not willing to expand the plan to include the Litani. For the present the discussions are limited to the Jordan Valley plan.

Sharett replied:

(1) He welcomes efforts to ease tensions.

(2) He affirms Israel's readiness for separate discussion of the water and refugee issues.

(3) Israel has always espoused a regional approach and has proposed talks with the Arabs on numerous occasions.

(4) Israel cannot sit back idly waiting for the Arabs to agree.

Bendor adds the off-the-record reactions of the Israeli participants.

In general, Johnston's basic approach is acceptable. The plan is limited to the Jordan River and takes no account of the Litani, whose waters are going to waste. The Benot-Yaaqov canal project could be included in the plan. The proposal for indirect cooperation destroys any chance of direct negotiations. Since the plan includes the Hatzbani River, there is no impediment to including the Litani. If Syria can be persuaded to accept the plan, Lebanon will readily fall into line. Dividing the Jordan water means limiting the amount Israel can receive; utilization of the Litani would compensate it for this.

It was agreed to hold a further meeting.[4] It was also agreed that Israel's willingness to discuss the proposal cannot be construed as a commitment to accept the plan or its basic assumptions about the water issue. Bendor promises to send a full report on the talk.[6]

Notes

1. See No. 436 and n. 2 there.
2. See No. 452 and n. 2 there, and No. 463.
3. See No. 291.
4. At a meeting the next day, the Israeli participants were ministers Sharett, Eshkol, and Bernstein, as well as Pinhas Sapir, Wiener, Weitz, and Bendor. Wiener and Weitz raised Israel's objections to the Main Plan for the regional water supply in the Jordan Valley. They argued that the southern Jordan Valley could not use the quantity of water allocated to it by the plan; that the surplus water was essential for Israel's irrigation enterprises; that designating the Sea of Galilee as the only regulatory basin and abandoning the Beit Netofa reservoir would entail a huge loss of water; and that the amount of water used to generate hydroelectric power would be much less than the plan forecast.

   Sharett again raised Israel's request that the Litani be included in the regional development plan and asked Johnston to submit Israel's request to President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles. He emphasized that Israel considered itself free to con-

tinue with its development and irrigation projects and that the Benot-Yaaqov project did not contradict the Main Plan.

Johnston was impressed by the presentation of the Israeli experts but did not accept their conclusion. He explained to Sharett why the Litani River could not be included in the regional water plan. He asked Israel to formulate its position within the next few weeks so that he could reach practical conclusions during his next visit. (For a report on the meeting and a summary of the presentations by Wiener and Weitz, see the appendices to Bendor's letters to Eban, 2 and 5 November 1953, 130.02/3688/11. Compare *FRUS*, 1952–4, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1394–95. See also Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. 1, pp. 92–95, and the letter from the United States Division to the Israel Mission in New York, 30 October 1953, 130.09/2330/20.) Johnston's next visit took place in June 1954.

5. On Johnston's talks in Lebanon and Jordan, see *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1380–82 and 1383–84.
6. See Bendor to Eban, 29 October 1953, 93.08/361/16; compare *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1391–92.

479. E. Elath to M. Sharett (telegram). 29 October 1953

Notes

1. The meeting took place on 28 October. Compare Strang's report, dated the same day, PRO, FO371/104790.
2. 25 October 1953, 93.04/41/13. In this telegram, Sharett instructed Elath as to how to react to Lloyd's declarations (see no. 434). Most of his arguments can be inferred from Strang's response; but see also No. 461.
3. See No. 256.
4. See No. 424 and No. 483 and n. 1 there.

480. M. Dayan (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 29 October 1953

Coded Tel.: 45; Inc.: 130.09/2331/2

Dayan addresses the telegram to the Chief of Staff. He reports on the Security Council session of the same day.[1] At the session, some idea of the resolutions that will be adopted on Qibya became clear: strengthening the UN truce supervision apparatus in Israel and enhancing its authority; demanding that the parties implement low-level technical cooperation in the field and high-level political cooperation; requesting Israel to pay compensation; and, of course, condemnation of Israel.

He adds that the British delegate is encouraging a reply by Bennike that would make Ben-Gurion appear a liar in his statement about the Qibya affair.

Notes

1. At the Security Council session of 29 October, Council members and Abba Eban, who participated, put various questions to Bennike, in the wake of the report he had submitted at the Council's previous session (see No. 475). Bennike was asked about the activities of the Mixed Armistice Commissions, how the armistice agreement was supervised, and the work of the UN observers, and for clarifications of the report he had submitted to the Security Council. His replies were given at the Council session of 9 November (see *SCOR*, Eighth Year, 632nd meeting, 29 October 1953; 635th meeting, 9 November 1953). For the resolution that was finally passed, see No. 534.
2. See No. 425, nn. 3 and 4.
3. One of the questions put by the British representative on the Council, Sir Gladwyn Jebb, was whether Bennike had any comments about Ben-Gurion's declaration that the Government of Israel rejected absolutely the claim that 600 IDF soldiers had participated in the operation and that an investigation had revealed that no IDF unit was absent from its base on the night of the operation (see n. 1 above and No. 449).

481. G. Rafael to W. Eytan (telegram). 29 October 1953

Notes

1. Two words are missing in original.
2. In a later telegram, Rafael clarified that the *New York Times* had published an Egyptian amendment to the announcement, as follows: "Arab countries cannot envisage any contact with Israel before Israel complies with resolutions [of the] General Assembly, especially regarding reconsider[ation of the] rights [of the] refugees" (Rafael to Eytan, telegram X75, 30 October 1953, 130.09/2331/2).
3. See Nos. 410, 417, and 440. For more information about the meeting, and about later meetings, see No. 548, paragraph 4, and n. 3 there.
4. See Eytan to Divon, telegram L41, 1 November 1953, 130.15/3744/1.

482. Editorial Note

Statements by Israel and Syria in the Security Council, 30 October

At the Security Council meeting on 30 October, the Syrian delegate presented a detailed statement of the reasons that had led his government to lodge a complaint against Israel on account of the work it was carrying out

in the demilitarized zone. He emphasized that the purpose of the Israeli project was to divert the waters of the Jordan River into Israel, that the installation gave Israel military advantages and prejudiced Syria's interests, and that Israel was thereby violating the armistice agreement. He demanded that the Security Council call upon Israel to suspend the work and restore the situation in the area to the *status quo ante*.

In his remarks, Abba Eban first stressed the national character of the project and its importance for the consolidation of Israel's economy. He argued that the Council had already rejected Syrian claims about the illegality of work in the demilitarized zone during its debate on the Hula dispute; the present work was being carried out in accordance with the concessions granted to the Palestine Electric Corporation in 1926. He emphasized that the Jordan River flowed within Israeli territory and never entered Syrian jurisdiction. Israel had the right to exploit water resources lying within its borders; hence Syria's complaint was groundless. Eban rejected Syria's policy of exercising a veto of the project. Should the Council approve this policy, it would doom Israel to be a wasteland and to economic dependency. As for Bennike's claim that the project infringed on the rights of the Arab residents living on their land and their irrigation arrangements, Eban stated that Israel would be careful to ensure that there would be no work on Arab-owned land and that current irrigation arrangements would be guaranteed.

Eban rejected the Syrian claim that the project gave Israel a military advantage. He argued that the excavation of the canal would make it equally difficult for both parties to cross the lines. (See *Yearbook of the United Nations*, 1953, pp. 225–26.) The discussion of Syria's complaint was continued on 11 November (ibid., pp. 226–27); another session was held on 18 November (see No. 520, n. 1).

483. E. Elath to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram). 31 October 1953

Notes

1. See No. 424. The main points of the British reply are quoted below. The full text of the note, 30 October 1953, is in File 130.02/2409/11.
2. See No. 479.

484. R. Shiloah to the United States Division (telegram). 2 November 1953

Notes

1. Also sent to Teddy Kollek and the Ministry of Finance.
2. On 28 October Dulles announced that the grant to Israel for the first half of the fiscal year—$26 million—had been released. He linked the release of the funds to Eban's statement in the Security Council meeting on 27 October and to the Council's resolution of the same day. See No. 475 (Editorial Note) and *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1390–91; for the official statement, see No. 493.
3. The Foreign Operations Administration, established on 1 August 1953 to assume the functions of the Office of the Director of Mutual Security, the Mutual Security Agency, the Technical Cooperation Administration, and other foreign aid agencies.
4. See No. 431, n. 4.

485. Israel Embassy in Washington to the United States Division (telegram). 2 November 1953

Note

1. When Eban met with Selwyn Lloyd on 28 October, he realized that the time was inappropriate for Israel to try to have the Security Council call on the parties to institute direct peace negotiations. Lloyd informed him that Britain intended to work for a resolution condemning Israel for its retaliatory action in Qibya, accompanied by a request that within three months the UNTSO chief of staff submit proposals for strengthening the UN supervisory apparatus. (For Lloyd's account of the talk, see PRO, FO371/104759, 28 October 1953. See also the telegram from the Western Europe Division to the Israel Embassy in Paris, 1 November 1953, 130.09/2345/3.)

486. M. Sharett to E. Elath (telegram). 2 November 1953

Notes

1. See Nos. 490 and 491.
2. In a second telegram to Elath, sent in advance of his meeting with Eden, Eytan added that whether a call for peace was issued depended exclusively on Britain; the French supported it and the Americans would also agree if the British removed their opposition. He also proposed raising the Suez issue with Eden (telegram D159, 2 November 1953, 130.09/2319/4).

487. W. Eytan to the Israel Missions Abroad (telegram). 2 November 1953

Notes

1. See the text of the note, 30 October 1953, 130.11/2513/3.
2. Cf. 497.

488. Editorial Note

Resignation of Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, 2 November 1953

On 2 November, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion notified the President of the State of his desire to resign from his governmental functions. In his letter to the President, he said that his wish to retire was motivated by "the extremely high level of tension and tremendous psychological effort" after many years of activity (93.08/390/16). Ben-Gurion formally tendered his resignation on 6 December. Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett became acting Prime Minister, and Pinhas Lavon was named acting Minister of Defence. In January 1954 Sharett presented his new government to the Knesset and received its confidence.

489. G. Rafael to W. Eytan. 3 November 1953

Notes

1. See No. 469, n. 2.
2. See No. 431, n. 6.
3. The appendix has been omitted here.
4. For a report on the talk, see Rafael's letter to Eban, 3 November 1953, 130.02/2381/11.
5. The article, dated 26 October and titled "Massacre in Qibya," has been omitted here.

490. E. Elath (London) to W. Eytan. 3 November 1953

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 93.04/41/13

Elath reports on his talk with Eden, which lasted 50 minutes and focused on the problems in Israel-Jordan relations in the wake of the Qibya operation and in advance of the Security Council debate. Elath sketched the background to the Qibya incident. He described the dangers inherent in

the state of anarchy along the Jordanian frontier and stressed the special responsibility of Great Britain, vis-à-vis its partners in the Tripartite Declaration of 1950, to take steps to remedy the situation. He said that Israel is firmly resolved to act to bring about a fundamental change in conditions. Analyzing the causes of the present state of affairs, Elath noted the situation in Jordan following 'Abdallah's assassination and, in particular, King Hussein's speech in which he openly called for the annihilation of Israel and hailed the liberation of Palestine as a practical item on the agenda of his government. He added that if Britain fails to counter this speech with a clear declaration that the Arabs must come to terms with Israel's existence, Britain's silence would be interpreted as neutrality and encourage the extremists in the Arab camp. In these circumstances, it is doubtful whether it would be possible to enhance the armistice regime and improve security along the borders. If Britain and its allies act forcefully and with vision, stated Elath, and demand that the Arabs reach a settlement with Israel, positive results may yet emerge from the present crisis.

In his response, Eden adopted a more moderate tone on the Qibya incident than had Selwyn Lloyd. He noted that steps must be taken to prevent similar incidents in the future. He said that the Mixed Armistice Commission must be bolstered, in cooperation with the United Nations. At the same time, he doubted whether there is any point to further general declarations calling for peace between Israel and Jordan. The Arabs would interpret such a statement by the Security Council as an attempt to evade discussion of the Qibya incident and its repercussions. Given the prevailing mood in the Arab camp, a declaration in favor of peace would not draw the Arabs closer to an accord with Israel; quite the contrary. Eden emphasized that although he considers peace to be a vital goal, he prefers to achieve it, not through solemn declarations, but by preparing the ground via discreet diplomatic channels.

At the end of the meeting, Eden said that he had not yet decided how to instruct the British delegation at the Security Council and would give further consideration to the matter. He asked Elath to send him a memorandum summarizing his statements as to the advantages that would accrue from a broader debate in the Security Council. Elath promised to send the requested document.[2]

Elath concludes that even if he failed to persuade Eden of the justice of the Israeli claim, he had brought him to recognize that the dangers to be anticipated in the future are likely to be far more serious than Qibya and that British policy and actions will have considerable bearing on future developments.

Notes

1. See No. 434.

2. See No. 491. Compare Eden's account of the talk, 2 November 1953, PRO, FO371/104759.
3. See No. 486 and n. 2 there.

491. E. Elath to A. Eden. 3 November 1953

Notes

1. The original can be found in PRO, FO371/104759.
2. See No. 490.
3. See No. 426 (Editorial Note).

492. A. Eban (New York) to M. Sharett. 3 November 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2331/3

Eban reports that in the charged atmosphere prevailing at the United Nations, the Jordanians are conducting a vigorous propaganda campaign against Israel. The previous day Israel was accused of blowing up the water pipeline, a charge that received wide media coverage. An alleged Israeli attack on Budrus received similar coverage. Eban notes the following: (1) During the present UN debate, Israel must not provide any opening whatsoever for charges against it. (2) If the Arab accusations are baseless, these must be repulsed not only by issuing public denials, but also by lodging counter-charges with the Mixed Armistice Commission or the United Nations, arguing that the Arabs are exacerbating tensions groundlessly.[1]

Note

1. See No. 496.

493. H. Stassen to A. Eban. 4 November 1953

Notes

1. On the delay in the implementation of the grant for 1954, see Nos. 389 and 454 (Editorial Note), and No. 484, n. 2. With regard to the agreement on special economic aid, signed on November 25, see No. 538 (Editorial Note).
2. See No. 484, n. 3.
3. See Vol. 7, No. 289.

494. E. Sasson (Rome) to E. Najar. 5 November 1953

Copy: 130.02/2411/13

Sasson reports on his talk with Mario Toscano, head of the Research Division of the Italian Foreign Ministry. Toscano confirmed that there has been a change for the better in the Ministry's attitude towards Israel. The group that advocates this policy is led by the prime minister and the head of the Political Division, del Balzo di Presenzano. Both favor a fundamental change in Italian policy towards the Arab states and Israel. The Ministry has already taken a decision on this matter, but the Trieste issue is monopolizing its time and preventing it from dealing with the Middle East. It has been agreed that Italian policy towards the Arab states and Israel must look to the future, not to the present. A special committee is to be established to review the issue in the light of the current situation and Italy's concrete interests in this part of the world, not according to past policy, which was based on exploiting every opportunity to demonstrate Italy's friendship for the Arabs and refraining from any action that might irk them. Toscano assumes that Sasson's talks with del Balzo played their part in changing Italy's attitude towards Israel. He even noted that del Balzo used Sasson's statements and quoted him at the regular weekly sessions in the Foreign Ministry. Toscano related that he had been instructed to prepare a speech on Italian policy towards the Arab countries and Israel for the closing session of the foreign-policy debate in the Chamber of Deputies. This is the first time since Israel gained its independence that he has received instructions to speak on Israel-Italy relations. When his draft, which included only a single sentence on the subject, was submitted to the prime minister for approval, the latter asked whether this was not too brief a treatment of the issue. The prime minister was ultimately persuaded that a short sentence calling on Israel and the Arab states to reach an accord would satisfy Israel more than hollow verbiage.

Toscano advises Israel to be patient and not to approach the Italians with unacceptable demands and proposals. As a case in point, he mentioned Israel's request that the new envoy present his credentials in Jerusalem, as well as a proposal raised two years ago for a treaty of friendship between Israel and Italy. Such requests invite hostile reactions towards Israel and should be avoided.

Toscano went on to discuss the pro-Arab stance of the Italian Foreign Ministry. He claims that the Israel legation in Rome bears no little responsibility for this policy. He was referring specifically to the activity of Ginossar and Yishai. The former had shown no interest in the Arab problem; the latter gave the impression that he had no in-depth understanding of Middle East issues. This had given a free hand to the Foreign Ministry officials who support the pro-Arab stance. Toscano added that Giustiniani

is known in Rome as a supporter of Israel.

Finally, he told Sasson that the Italian Foreign Ministry is envious of the good relations between Israel and France and knows about the close ties between the Israeli Embassy in Paris and the Quai d'Orsay on all matters relating to the Middle East. When Sasson expressed his willingness to place his knowledge of the Middle East at the disposal of the Italian Foreign Ministry, Toscano replied that the Italians fear that he might seek some *quid pro quo,* and conditions are not yet ripe for this.

Notes

1. See No. 431, n. 6.
2. See No. 408 and n. 2 there.
3. See Vol. 6: No. 456 and n. 3 there, and Nos. 471 and 504.

495. E. Elath (London) to W. Eytan. 5 November 1953

Coded Tel: L94; Inc.: 130.09/2319/5

Elath reports on Clement Davies' talk with Churchill. Churchill said that, since the assassination of Lord Moyne, no incident connected with Israel had shocked him as much as the Qibya affair. He added that such an event would never have happened were Weizmann still alive. Davies explained the events that led up to Qibya, but did not succeed in persuading him. Churchill repeated that even the wholesale slaughter of innocent women and children could not justify a retaliatory raid such as the one perpetrated by the Israeli army. He added that he regretted these tendencies of Israel, first and foremost as a Zionist, because the State of Israel needs a good reputation more than anything else.

They went on to discuss the negotiations with the Egyptians. Churchill knew of the Israeli note and also of the British replies.[1] He remarked that Israel has no cause for anxiety; he will continue to ensure that Israel does not suffer on account of the new Anglo-Egyptian accord. He did not go into details on this point. Davies did not question Churchill's sincerity, but said that general promises are not sufficient; further pressure must be exerted in order to receive clear commitments.

Note

1. See Nos. 167 and 424 and n. 5 there.

496. M. Sharett to V. Bennike (telegram). 5 November 1953

Note

1. Compare No. 492.

497. Note from the Israel Legation in Prague to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Czechoslovakia. 6 November 1953

Notes

1. Kaddar, who was chargé d'affaires in the legation, submitted the note to the Czechoslovak deputy foreign minister on 7 November 1953.
2. In File 130.11/2513/3.
3. On the detention, trial, and verdicts against Oren and Orenstein, see No. 487 and n. 1 there.

498. R. Shiloah (Washington) to the United States Division and T. Kollek. 6 November 1953

Coded Tels.: WIA711-712; Outg.: 93.01/2209/8

Shiloah reports on Eban's meeting with Byroade that morning, at which he too was present. At the outset they attempted to clarify the implications to be drawn from Stassen's letter[1] concerning the overall amount of the grant and release of the funds. Byroade answered that, in his personal opinion, the total amount will be \$52 million. The appropriation to Iran did not affect the amount allocated for Israel. They had initially determined that \$55 million in economic assistance was required and had acted on this basis. He disclosed that the money for Iran will come from the funds allotted to Arab states that have not yet prepared plans for using their allocations. Eban and Shiloah stated that on the basis of their talks with him and Stassen they had understood that Israel would receive closer to \$70 million. Byroade replied that the sum discussed had always been \$55 million, but it would be possible to review the situation in the course of the year. He added that Administration policy is to gradually reduce the amount of aid.

Byroade attempted to avoid Security Council–related issues on the pretext that he had refused to discuss such issues with the Arabs, too. Shiloah and Eban gained the impression that Byroade's unwillingness to touch upon the subject stems from his disagreement with Lodge and unfamiliarity with events in New York. They rejected his argument, insisting that Washing-

ton is the capital of one of the most important members of the Security Council and they are obliged to present Israel's position. Byroade answered that his country's status in the Arab world is gradually being undermined. The lives of Americans in Jordan are in danger; another Arab capital is threatening to sever relations should the Security Council adopt a strong resolution calling for peace. The Anglo-Egyptian negotiations are about to fail. Israel, by its declarations, is merely raising further obstacles. The U.S. government desires peace, but this cannot be achieved through resolutions.

Shiloah and Eban explained the importance of the project on the Jordan River and said that it could be carried out without prejudice to the rights of the local inhabitants. As for relations with Jordan, they both cautioned against blindly following the British lead and opposing a Security Council call for peace. Eban explained that Israeli public opinion is no less sensitive than its Arab counterpart; only the recognition that the world is doing something to promote peace can ensure its exercise of self-restraint. The situation would deteriorate should the feeling prevail that the world has abandoned hopes for peace. In the course of the talk, it transpired that the State Department understands that a call for peace is necessary, but would like to soften it as far as possible.

Shiloah concludes that the entire talk was marked by evasion, confusion, and a lack of backbone on the part of Byroade. He also had the impression that, as a result of the State Department's fiasco in the grant issue, its officials are liable to retaliate against Israel by giving the narrowest interpretation to any affirmative political decisions taken by the highest echelons of the U.S. administration.

Notes

1. Two telegrams with sequential numbers, both relating to the meeting with Byroade, are printed here as one document.
2. See No. 493.
3. See No. 502.

499. J. Tsur (Paris) to W. Eytan. 9 November 1953

Coded Tel.: MGP406; Outg.: 93.02/164/2

Replying to a telegram from Eytan,[1] Tsur reports on a conversation with Parodi concerning the Security Council debate. Parodi began by saying that he is not yet familiar with the issue and that the French position is still to be determined. After Tsur presented the Israeli viewpoint, Parodi replied as follows:

(1) Regarding the Benot-Yaaqov canal, he accepts the three points raised by Eban in his speech.[2] He does not attach importance to the case itself and believes that too much was made of it. Tsur gave him a map of the canal and emphasized that any decision to allow Syria a veto over Israeli development enterprises would force Israel to continue its opposition to Bennike and widen the conflict. Parodi agreed that Israel has no alternative; in his opinion, it should not be difficult to find an acceptable compromise. (2) The Qibya incident utterly shocked French public opinion. Through this action, he said, Israel has lost sympathy throughout the world. Parodi expressed understanding that the operation was the result of an unbearable situation; but nothing, he said, could justify the slaughter of women and children. He did not commit himself to a final position in the Security Council debate.

Notes

1. It is not clear to which of Eytan's telegrams Tsur is referring. It would seem, however, that its main points are included in Najar to the Foreign Ministry, telegram NPT14, 4 November 1953, 130.09/2338/21. Najar wrote that from his talks with French diplomats in New York it transpired that there were differences of opinion between the Quai d'Orsay in Paris and the French representatives at the UN. Whereas the former supported Bennike's assertion that continued work at the Benot-Yaaqov Bridge required Syrian consent, the UN delegation supported Israel's position. They proposed that Tsur meet with Parodi for an explanatory talk and presented the arguments they felt should be raised. (See also Eytan to Tsur, L59, 6 November 1953, 130.09/2345/3.)
2. See No. 482 (Editorial Note).

500. A. Eban (New York) to M. Sharett, 10 November 1953

Coded Tel.: 124; Inc.: 130.09/2331/3

(1)[1] Eban cables that a sharp Security Council condemnation of Israel for the Qibya incident could create problems for Israel along the entire international diplomatic front and provide a foothold for Israel's enemies. As an example he cites the condemnation of the People's Republic of China, which had served to justify an international embargo and its exclusion from UN institutions. Consequently he believes that Israel has a vital interest in softening the criticism. Another reason is that world Jewry's confidence in Israel's political sagacity has collapsed; there is a growing feeling that senseless and unjustified acts that do nothing to enhance Israel's security are damaging to the Jewish people as a whole in its struggle for security and respect. No Israeli action has ever met with such vehement and

united demurrals by world Jewry. For these reasons, Israel should not view the severity of the expected Security Council condemnation with equanimity and must do everything in its power to soften the resolution.

(2) Eban requests approval to make a statement in the Security Council expressing Israel's vigorous rejection of the Qibya operation and profound regret at the loss of life. He hopes that this step will blunt the criticism and attenuate its sting.[2]

(3) Eban adds that he has no qualms on this matter; he firmly believes that this act has diminished national security from several points of view and undermined the foundations of Israel's existence and status. He is convinced that, deep in their hearts, Jews throughout the world and in Israel recognize that the Qibya incident was an act of folly. In short, he believes that a strong dissociation from it accurately expresses the Israeli and Jewish position and is not a tactical prevarication.

(4) Hence he recommends not relying exclusively on the Prime Minister's statement,[3] which, in his opinion, was not bold enough or sufficiently clear in its dissociation from the incident and was presented as a factual account that did not gain much credence anywhere.[4]

(5) Eban proposes that his speech at the United Nations begin with a detailed description of the security situation, dwelling in particular on the plague of attacks originating in Jordan, go on to harshly condemn Jordan for violating the armistice agreement, and then criticize the position of the United Nations and the Powers. He would wind up by saying that although Israel understands the public mood that led to the attack on Qibya, the Government of Israel cannot condone such retaliations; they are not morally justified, nor do they contribute to Israel's prime objective of achieving peace and good neighborly relations. He would also state that although this incident constituted a breach in Israel's patience and forbearance in the face of constant Arab provocations, it remains Israel's overall policy to frustrate Arab attacks, including assaults on its patience.[5] Finally, he would express regret, but not an apology, and immediately proceed to expose the roots of the present state of affairs.[6]

(6) Eban believes that if he speaks in this vein the Security Council may be content to express regret rather than condemnation of Israel, and the impression left by the incident would fade over time.[7]

Notes

1. Here and below (nn. 3–6), Ben-Gurion added handwritten comments in the margin. Here he noted, "He is wrong in this case; he does not understand what motivates England and its allies to make this condemnation."
2. See No. 449 (Editorial Note).
3. Here Ben-Gurion noted: "For Eban's information: Bennike's version is a fantastic fabrication!"

4. Here Ben-Gurion's noted: "He must add—that if the UN declares open season on Israeli blood by setting different criteria, it would be undermining the moral basis of the United Nations."

5. In the margin, between Paragraphs (5) and (6), Ben-Gurion wrote: "I have nothing against this statement—but he is totally wrong in his prognosis as to the reaction of England and its allies."

Sharett received Ben-Gurion's comments. After consultation with the acting defense minister, Pinhas Lavon, he instructed Eban to add the following after the words "the position of the United Nations and the Powers" in Paragraph (5):

"Although [the] background [of the] Kibya incident [is] clear and [the] mood which produced it fully understandable to it, [the Government of Israel] regards this attack as [a] most unfortunate explosion of pent up feeling and [a] tragic breakdown of restraints in view [of the] constant revolting provocation culminating [in the] murder [of a] woman [and] her children in [their] sleep. [The Government of Israel] expresses its deep and unreserved regret at [the] loss [of] so many innocent lives at Kibya. It expects [the] same feelings to be shared by all concerned at [the] killing of any innocent people in border zone. [The Security Council] will gravely undermine [the] moral foundations [of the] UN if its resol[ution] creates [the] impression [of] differentiation between victims belonging [to] different sides."

Sharett told Eban not to commit the Government to a policy of non-retaliation. He added that there was skepticism in Israel whether the Israeli declaration could alter the Security Council's decision, which was actuated by political considerations (Sharett to Eban, telegram Y610, 11 November 1953, 130.09/2330/11). See also M. Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. 1, p. 141; compare what Eban said at the United Nations (No. 507 [Editorial Note]).

6. Ben-Gurion added two question marks here.

7. See No. 507.

501. R. Shiloah (Washington) to M. Sharett. 10 November 1953

Coded Tel.: 720; Inc.: 130.09/2310/4

Shiloah addresses his telegram to Sharett, Eytan, Bendor, and the Chief of the General Staff. He reports on a meeting with Bedell Smith, with the participation of Eban, Dayan, Herzog, and himself, at which the issues of security along the borders was discussed. Eban began by explaining that in talks at the Security Council and in Washington Israel encounters a refusal to acknowledge the severity of the situation along its frontiers. Accordingly they had decided to raise the subject with Smith, in the hope that he might be able to find a solution to the problem. Dayan described the situation along Israel's borders, painting a gloomy picture of the prospects for security without a major change in attitude on the part of the Egyptian and Jordanian authorities. He spoke of the organized bands that operate from Jordan and explained that only concerted action by the Jordanian authori-

ties could put a stop to their activities.

Smith admitted that the situation is grave; from his experience in North Africa he confirmed that attacks on traffic and travelers is an Arab method of warfare. Without putting forward a solution, he emphasized the damage caused by operations such as Qibya. In his opinion, Israel had erred by not calling for a Security Council debate on the infiltrations before Qibya. Had it done so, it might have obtained a condemnation of the Arabs; now, after Qibya, there is no alternative to condemnation of both sides. He knows that condemnation alone is not a solution; on the other hand, a UN resolution is not to be taken lightly.

He reiterated that efforts should be concentrated on peace with the Arabs. He said that it has been decided to divide regional defense among the countries involved on the basis of bilateral agreements. He regretted Ben-Gurion's resignation[1] and noted that he had wanted to visit Israel while Ben-Gurion was still in office. He intends to arrange a visit in the coming months.

Note

1. See No. 488 (Editorial Note).

502. R. Shiloah (Washington) to the United States Division, P. Sapir, and T. Kollek. 11 November 1953

Coded Tel.: WIA722; Outg.: 93.01/2209/8

Shiloah reports on Eban's meeting with Sherman and Stassen;[1] Norman Powell was also present. Concerning the size of the grant, Stassen stated that the amount released is no clear indication of the total sum that will be made available to Israel. The matter will be re-examined in the course of the year and affected by considerations of regional needs. Unlike Byroade, he did not deny that the allocation for Iran was detrimental to Israel. Neither did he assert that from the outset Israel had been allocated no more than \$55 million. He does not consider it likely that funds will be transferred to Israel from other sources (under §513 of the Mutual Security Act), nor does he believe that Israel can count on a supplement under §550. Restrictions on the type of goods and the amounts that can be disbursed under this section are very strict. Nevertheless, he will examine the possibility.

Concerning the release of the funds, Stassen was impressed by Eban's account of the deteriorating situation caused by the delay in releasing the grant funds. Eban said that if Israel could hold out through November and

December, there is a chance that the consolidation measures decided upon at the Jerusalem conference might begin to bear fruit. But should this effort fail, attempts to solve the problem of the short-term loans would also be doomed to failure. Sherman explained that the release of the funds would not harm import planning and that it is possible to find a way to release the money without prejudice to the spirit and meaning of §105. When Stassen asked how much Israel needs, Eban replied that the amount is $20 million. Stassen promised to consult the legal experts to examine the options.

Shiloah concludes that the meeting was conducted in a spirit of good will. Although there were no concrete promises, it opened the way for further clarifications with Stassen's aides in the coming days.

Notes

1. See No. 493.
2. See No. 498.
3. See No. 431, n. 4.

503. A. Eban (New York) to M. Sharett. 11 November 1953

Coded Tel.: 135; Inc.: 130.09/2331/3

Eban gives his assessment of the political situation. The focus of attention is the serious two-front campaign being waged in the Security Council. There is no chance that any practical result will emerge from the discussion of security along Israel's borders. In other circumstances, the shock waves that swept the world after the Qibya raid could have given impetus to efforts for peace. Such an effort, however, would have required a measure of moral strength on the part of the Great Powers to overcome Arab opposition to peace. At this stage, with the renewal of the Cold War, fear of Arab enmity has grown to the extent that there is a reluctance even to advocate peace between Israel and the Arab states. The Western powers have decided to deliberately miss this opportunity to relegate the armistice regime to the status of an outdated arrangement. Eban expects that Qibya will be condemned more forcefully than Arab infiltration. He adds that the onslaught of criticism against Israel has somewhat abated since the incident; it is only British indignation that has kept the Qibya incident from being subsumed in a broader context. Meanwhile, Eban believes that, at best, the resolution condemning the attack on Qibya will be accompanied by a call for peace, which will be interpreted as criticism of the Arabs and will slightly help balance the negative public impression created by the

incident. In light of this assessment, Eban considers that the important aspect of the whole affair is not the condemnation, which will be of slight value and negative character, but rather the opportunity to present comprehensive and accurate information about Israel's security problems. Though this information may not have any effect in the short time left before the resolution is adopted, it is enough if it conveys a few realistic concepts to the Jews who are following the discussions intently as well as to the public at large and to the representatives of foreign countries. Eban does not believe that anything serious will result from discussions about strengthening the UN supervision apparatus.

The debate on the Jordan River project will probably have more practical results. It is possible that the resolution will not explicitly recognize Israel's right to continue working in the demilitarized zone; but neither will it deny that right. This will open the way for a solution after a period of exhausting negotiations. Nothing has been said to counter the argument Eban put forward on 30 October.[2] There is growing acceptance that the project does not negatively affect or harm the Arabs, as was originally claimed. Eban's only fear is that, meanwhile, a hunger for international authority has been created and must be satisfied; the price will probably be a suspension of work during the rainy season, accompanied by political activity in anticipation of a resumption of work in the spring.

The situation of American Jewry is extremely complex. On the one hand, writes Eban, it is wonderful to see a united Jewish display of power. On the other hand, there is serious concern that the foundations of American Jewry's position have been undermined. Outwardly, the Jews have been demonstrating exemplary loyalty to Israel in its time of trial. In private, though, they are leveling harsh criticism of Israel's policy, which, in their opinion, is marked by impatience and impulsiveness, and are expressing their moral repugnance at the Qibya attack. This raid did not garner even as much sympathy as the attacks by the Irgun Zvai Leumi and Lehi during the struggle against the British, since a national liberation movement is viewed differently from an internationally recognized state. No member of the Embassy staff has heard positive comments from U.S. Jews about the incident. They have heard only reservations and criticism, in particular of its inherent political and security folly. To a marked, although lesser extent, Jews are criticizing the clash with the UN over the Jordan River project. The information efforts of Israel's representatives, presenting the vital nature of this work, has somewhat mitigated this criticism.

Confusion reigns at the State Department. Dulles decided not to go all the way on this issue and will steer a cautious path in the future. Rumor has it that he vented his wrath on Byroade and his colleagues. This is likely to intensify their bitterness and the desire for revenge among the Orientalists there. They speak derisively of the Secretary of State, who bowed to the first pressure exerted by pro-Israeli public opinion, and are spreading

nasty stories about U.S. Jews, asserting that they are only half-American and pay more attention to the representative of a foreign country than to their own leaders. As a result of this mind set, American Jewish circles are concerned that a successful outcome to the grant struggle may only intensify antisemitism and spur State Department efforts to lessen the influence of Jewish organizations on public opinion.

All is quiet on other fronts at the UN, except that, due to the circumstances that have arisen, Israel has lost its opportunity to mount a political campaign on the refugee issue.

Eban adds that Ben-Gurion's resignation has heightened the confusion and made it harder to conduct this difficult international battle.

Notes

1. See Eban to Sharett, telegram W708, 6 November 1953, 93.01/2209/8.
2. See No. 482 (Editorial Note).
3. See No. 498.
4. See No. 488 (Editorial Note).

504. M. Amir (The Hague) to E. Najar. 12 November 1953.

Orig.: 130.10/2516/2

Amir reports on a talk with the Dutch foreign minister, Luns. Amir presented Israel's arguments on the Qibya incident and the Jordan water project. Luns's response was as follows:

The friendship between the Netherlands and Israel had not been shaken; the Netherlands understands the grave situation in which Israel finds itself. Because of this friendship, he feels a need to state frankly his government's view on these issues. For many years Israel has suffered an unbroken series of provocations that caused the death of many innocent civilians and widespread destruction of property. Yet none of these acts had made such a negative impression as the Qibya incident. Luns said that Bennike has concluded that the Israeli army carried out this act; personally, he is inclined to accept Ben-Gurion's declaration.[2] At the same time, he seconds the argument that the act was politically unwise, harmed Israel's good name in the international community, and provided the Arabs with ammunition to use against it. He reckons that Israel will be hearing about this incident for many days and years to come. The Netherlands, as a country that is friendly to Israel, must be convinced of the justice of Israel's actions, he said. The Netherlands must believe that it is supporting a country that acts justly, controls its passions, and imposes its authority on its people, both

soldiers and civilians.

Luns recounted that at a session of the Dutch cabinet he managed to defeat an attempt to change the Netherlands' policy on Jerusalem, have it join the ranks of those who advocate territorial internationalization, and move its legation from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv. According to Luns, had this discussion taken place after the Qibya incident he would probably have been unable to convince the government to accept his position. He regrets that Israel has damaged the friendly atmosphere it could have enjoyed in the UN General Assembly. In his opinion, Israel will continue to pay for the Qibya incident. Israel must not go too far in its reactions and must cultivate nerves of steel.

Luns differentiated between the Qibya incident, a negative action that did Israel no good, and the Benot-Yaaqov canal. On the latter issue, the Netherlands has shown considerable understanding of Israel's struggle to overcome the aridness of its homeland and make it flourish. On this, Israel will receive the Netherlands' full backing. He hopes that, despite the damage already caused to Israel, a resolution will be adopted that will allow it to work on the Jordan River project while safeguarding the interests of local landowners.

At the end of the conversation, Luns asked about the reasons for Ben-Gurion's resignation, praised his leadership, and asked whether there is a candidate to replace him who is acceptable to the entire country.

Notes

1. See No. 475 (Editorial Note).
2. See No. 449.

505. E. Elath (London) to M. Sharett. 12 November 1953

Notes

1. See No. 440, n. 4.
2. See No. 434.
3. See No. 483.

506. Sh. Divon (Paris) to W. Eytan. 12 November 1953.

Coded Tel.: 28; Inc.: 130.09/2345/2

Divon reports on a talk with Mahmud Mahluf, who had arrived in Paris from Cairo. He told Divon that he had informed the Egyptian army

commander, 'Abd al-Hākim 'Amir, about his meeting with Divon.[1] After consultation with his colleagues, 'Amir told Mahluf that it was worth meeting with Divon to learn what Israel has in mind when it speaks of a settlement with Egypt. He said that Egypt has no aggressive intent towards Israel and wishes to clarify Israel's position on three issues: territorial continuity, the refugees, and Jerusalem. The Egyptian army commander did not believe it necessary to arrange a high-level meeting between the sides at this stage. Divon told Mahluf that in the process of negotiations a formula could be found for territorial continuity that would not prejudice Israeli sovereignty.

In Divon's assessment, the meeting was intended to lull Israel and perhaps even to lead it astray. Nevertheless, he believes it is possible to use Mahluf to transmit messages Israel would like to have conveyed to Egypt. He asks for instructions[2] and has notified Rafael of the meeting.[3]

Notes

1. No details of the talk have been found.
2. Eytan instructed Divon to tell Mahluf that Israel was interested in a settlement with Egypt but not at the price of giving in on vital issues. He added that Israeli policymakers valued the contact with Mahluf, but what he had to say did not go beyond platitudes. "There is no way to make progress at that level." (See Eytan to the Israel Embassy in Paris, telegram L81, 15 November 1953, 130.09/2345/3.)
3. In response to the telegram, Rafael cabled Eytan and Divon that he feared Israel was making approaches to Egypt through too many channels, and this could complicate matters. He agreed with Divon that "if what Mahluf said was true, their intention was to mislead us." He suggested suspending contact with envoys of Mahluf's ilk until such time as Egypt was prepared to send a more credible person authorized to negotiate. He was opposed to communicating with 'Amir through Mahluf, except for a declaration that the Government of Israel was prepared to meet an authorized envoy (Rafael to the Foreign Ministry, telegram MTA15, 16 November 1953, 130.09/2338/21).

507. Editorial Note

Speech by Abba Eban to the Security Council during its Discussion of the Qibya Operation , 12 November 1953

On 12 November, Eban addressed another Security Council session on the Qibya incident (see No. 475). He reviewed the history of the armistice agreements, especially that between Israel and Jordan, and laid Israel's security problems before the Council. He emphasized the Arabs' refusal to comply with the Security Council's calls to negotiate a peace settlement

and reiterated Israel's aspirations for peace and secure borders. With regard to the Qibya operation, Eban, on behalf of the Government of Israel, expressed profound and unreserved regret at the loss of innocent life. He related the circumstances leading up to the incident as presented in Ben-Gurion's statement of 19 October (see No. 449). Israel, said Eban, had repeatedly expressed its desire to find a solution to the deteriorating situation along its border with Jordan; on various occasions it had expressed its willingness to open negotiations with Jordanian representatives. The existing channels of contact had proven unsatisfactory during times of tension. Hence, on behalf of the Government of Israel, he proposed that senior political and military representatives of Israel and Jordan meet at UN headquarters without delay to discuss the problems of the armistice agreement, in particular, means of preventing border incidents (for the text of the proposal, see No. 509, appendix).

Eban concluded by stating that the Council should take the following measures: (1) It should truthfully diagnose the tension along the borders as arising from the absence of peaceful relations between Israel and the Arab states. (2) It should draw attention to the fact that the main objective of the armistice agreements, to lead to permanent peace, had not been accomplished, and that it took precedence over other articles of the agreement. (3) It should draw attention to the fact that its past resolutions on peace and security had not been implemented, in particular that of 1 September 1951 concerning free passage through the Suez Canal; nor had Article VIII of the Israel-Jordan armistice agreement been implemented. (4) It should take note that the source of current tension was infiltration into Israel, especially from Jordan. (5) It should ask the relevant mixed armistice commissions to pay special attention to those sections of the armistice agreements that had not been implemented. (6) It should call on all signatories to the armistice agreements to open direct negotiations to replace these agreements with final peace settlements. (See *SCOR*, 8th year, 637th meeting, 12 November 1953.)

At the Security Council session on 16 November, Haykal, the Jordanian representative, rejected Eban's proposal for an Israeli-Jordanian meeting at UN headquarters and demanded that Israel be condemned for the Qibya operation (ibid., 638th meeting, 16 November 1953).

508. A. Eban (New York) to M. Sharett. 13 November 1953

Coded Tel.: 150; Inc.: 130.09/2331/3

Eban reports on his speech in the Security Council, in which he described the full gravity of Israel's security situation.[1] The press laid particular emphasis on Israel's proposal for an immediate meeting at the UN between

Israeli and Jordanian representatives to discuss improving security conditions. This proposal, which was Rafael's idea, also caused a stir among Security Council delegates, who gave it serious consideration. Though it was originally intended to take some of the pressure off Israel, it has become an issue in its own right that could be a focus of international attention. To give it the stature it deserves, Eban proposes that the Government immediately undertake the following actions:[2] (1) Submit the text of the proposal to the representatives of the Three Powers in Israel. (2) Submit the proposal to members of the Security Council in their respective capitals. (3) Explain the novelty of the proposal to the foreign press—that it is intended to solve the most urgent security problems through diplomatic channels in the context of the Security Council debate together with the existing framework of the mixed armistice commissions. The proposal makes it possible for both sides to avail themselves of Bennike's services as well as the favorable conditions at UN headquarters. (4) Mount an information campaign in the various capitals and in the press, emphasizing that this proposal stems from Israel's concern over the potential serious repercussions of a deterioration in the security situation; it is not intended to replace Israel's request that the Security Council call on both parties to enter negotiations aimed at a final settlement.

Eban and his staff are trying to mobilize public support for both the meeting proposal and the call for negotiations. He intends to meet with the UN secretary-general and ask him to support the proposal. Eban believes that the Israeli proposal has sown confusion among the Jordanians and British. He is certain that it has considerably improved Israel's situation at the UN.

Notes

1. See No. 507 (Editorial Note).
2. See No. 509 and n. 2 there.

509. Note from A. Eban to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. 13 November 1953

Notes

1. See No. 507 (Editorial Note).
2. On 16 November, the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem sent similar notes containing the text of Eban's statement in the Security Council to the representatives in Israel of Britain, France, and the United States (130.02/2408/13). That same day, Eban sent a similar note to Dulles (93.08/360/2). In parallel, Eytan instructed Israel's heads of missions in the capitals of member states of the Security Council to officially inform

their host governments of Eban's proposal (Eytan's telegram to Israel missions abroad, 15 November 1953, 130.09/2319/4).

510. A. Eban (New York) to M. Sharett. 13 November 1953

Coded Tel.: 143; Inc: 130.09/2331/3

In reply to Sharett's telegram,[1] Eban estimates that the issue of the border disputes will be wound up within ten days and the issue of the Jordan River project three to four days later.[2] If the Knesset begins its debate on the matter even one hour before its conclusion at the UN it would be demonstrating an appalling lack of basic political responsibility. Eban explains that the delegation in New York has already had to withstand extremely difficult situations as a result of unconsidered Israeli actions, such as the Qibya operation. It surely deserves to be able to contend with this wretched situation without further complications that could be postponed.[3]

Notes

1. In his telegram, Sharett noted that some parties were pressing for a policy debate in the Knesset. He added that the Government believed that the debate should not be held until after the Security Council wound up its discussions, since the opposition would "knife us in the back over Qibya and say whatever they felt with regard to the Jordan." He asked Eban to estimate when the Security Council debate would end and for his honest opinion as to whether a domestic debate would be damaging (12 November 1953, 130.09/2330/21).
2. The Security Council resolution on the Qibya operation was adopted on 24 November; see No. 534 (Editorial Note). The resolution on Syria's complaint about the work being carried out in the demilitarized zone was not adopted until 22 January 1954. See No. 620, n. 1.
3. The Knesset debate took place on 30 November and 1 December. See No. 550 (Editorial Note).

511. E. Sasson (Rome) to E. Najar. 16 November 1953

Copy: 130.02/2411/13

Sasson reports on a talk with the Italian deputy foreign minister for political affairs, Benvenuti. Sasson's impression is that Benvenuti is astute, energetic, and practical. He was extremely frank and even shared with Sasson Italy's domestic and external difficulties in the Trieste dispute. Sasson spoke of Israel-Italian relations; he regretted that, five years after the estab-

lishment of Israel, the two countries have not yet signed any pact leading to closer ties and interests, such as aviation, consular, cultural, and trade agreements. Sasson described various economic activities that Israel is conducting in Italy; he asked that Italy reciprocate and that relations between the two countries take a more concrete shape.

Benvenuti asked Sasson for further details, so he could report on the entire matter to the Foreign Ministry. Replying to Sasson's statement that Israel has signed many agreements with countries with whom it has fewer common interests than it does with Italy, Benvenuti admitted that, in this respect, Italy has not been conducting a long-term policy. Italian policymakers have not found a chance for long-term planning. Had they done so, Italy's dependence on the United States might have been satisfactorily resolved and Italy would have found its rightful place among the great powers.

At the end of the talk, Benvenuti pointed out that Israel has acted unfairly by insisting that the new Italian minister present his credentials in Jerusalem. Israel's request created the regrettable impression that Israel is not interested in having an Italian representative in Israel. He added that, as a defeated country and former major power now reduced to the condition of a weak state, Italy is extremely sensitive about its national prestige and honor and interprets anything not to its taste as a slight. Sasson assured Benvenuti that Israel has no such intention; its policy has been incorrectly interpreted. He said that the Israeli step was intended to settle the Jerusalem issue as quickly as possible and impede measures for its internationalization.

Note

1. See No. 408 and n. 2 there.

512. E. Elath to W. Eytan (telegram). 17 November 1953

Notes

1. The reference is to Eytan's telegram to several Israeli missions abroad (see No. 509, n. 2).
2. Compare Nutting's account of the talk, 18 November 1953, PRO, FO371/104756.

513. E. Ben-Zvi (Helsinki) to the Western Europe Division. 17 November 1953

Copy: 130.02/2414/3

Ben-Zvi reports on the visit paid him by the head of the Chinese legation

in Finland, Yao Den-Shin. Ben-Zvi pointed out to him that Israel has recognized China. Yao replied that he was prepared to relay to his government a proposal by the Israeli government for an exchange of representatives between the two countries, should such a proposal be initiated by the Israeli government.

Ben-Zvi believes that Yao came for the express purpose of conveying this message and is bringing it to the notice of the Foreign Ministry without delay.

Note

1. When he received the note, Levavi remarked that he believed that Ben-Zvi's intuition was accurate and that China was undoubtedly seeking to expand its international ties. He asked Sharett whether it was permissible to revive the issue of establishing relations with China and proposed ascertaining the American attitude. Eytan supported the idea, but proposed that Eban be consulted first. Sharett agreed. (See memo from Levavi, 29 November, filed with Ben-Zvi's letter.) See also No. 592 and n. 2 there.

514. A. Eban to Sir Gladwyn Jebb. 18 November 1953

Notes

1. On the same day, an identical letter was sent to the U.S. and British representatives at the UN (93.03/3007/5).
2. For the draft resolution, adopted verbatim by the Security Council on 24 November, see No. 534. See also Nos. 519 and 533.
3. In another letter of the same day, Eban asked that the following amendments be made: (1) to add to the introduction: "Resolution of 17 November 1950, Resolution of 1 September 1951"; (2) in Article A, paragraph 1, to delete "armed forces of Israel"; (3) in Article C, paragraph 1, to delete: "in order" and to add the words "for that purpose" before the phrase "that the parties should abide" (93.03/3007/5).
4. Replying to Eban, Jebb said that the draft resolution reflected the consensus reached by the three Western powers after lengthy discussions and that accordingly he now intended to submit it to the Council. He explained that the proposal was an attempt to prevent a deterioration in the situation in the Middle East, which was adversely affecting the interests of all parties, including Israel. He hoped that Israel would understand this approach and accept the assumption that in the long term the draft resolution would serve the interests of peace (18 November 1953, 130.02/2405/3).

515. E. Evron (Washington) to Sh. Bendor. 18 November 1953

Memorandum: 130.20/2460/3

Evron gives an account of Dayan's talk with Congressman Javits, at which he was present. Javits said that it is clear to all that the State of Israel would play an extremely important role in any regional defense plan. Haifa harbor, the airbases, and the open spaces of the Negev are a basic element in the plans of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This is why Javits supports plans intended to develop this Israeli potential. He added that many acknowledge Israel's dynamism, even if this energy is sometimes channeled into dubious acts, such as Qibya. He asked what had been done, in particular by the IDF general staff, to gain the support of the U.S. military attachés in Israel. Javits expressed understanding of Israel's concern that military information transmitted to the Americans might be passed on to the Arabs. Nevertheless he suggested reassessing this policy in the broad context of Israel's relations with the United States.

Dayan explained that the central issue is why the military attachés request information from the IDF. If the objective is to find the best ways and means to strengthen Israel and its military potential, so as to incorporate it into regional defense plans, there is no reason to withhold information. If, however, the attachés' intention is to learn about developments in the IDF so as to preserve a balance between the IDF and Arab armies—that is, the information is being sought not in order to enhance Israel's defense capability but to pursue State Department policy of preserving a military balance between Israel and the Arabs—then Israel cannot agree to provide such information of its own free will. Dayan mentioned the attachés total lack of interest in the potential of Israel's military industry and the rejection of Israeli requests to strengthen the air force. Javits asked whether the attachés seem to be personally biased against Israel. Dayan replied that the attachés' attitude is entirely positive; they understand the absurdity of their mission but are powerless to alter the situation.

Javits was impressed by Dayan's remarks. In this spirit, he said, he and his colleagues must attack the State Department for sacrificing the vital interests and harming the military capability of true friends in order to pursue a worthless policy of appeasement that is likely to be harmful.

Javits went on to ask for details about the Qibya incident. Dayan based his answer on the Prime Minister's statement and the assertion that the incident was a reaction by residents of the border region.[1] Javits apparently did not believe this version of events. He asked what the Israeli government is doing to punish those responsible, adding that no wise government would tolerate such actions. All Israel's friends in America are suggesting

that Israel condemn the act and punish the guilty parties. Dayan stated forcefully that no action will be taken to punish those responsible. The State of Israel is duty-bound to safeguard the lives of its citizens; if it cannot do so for reasons beyond its control, it cannot punish those who try to defend their lives and property.

At this point in the talk, it became clear to Javits's interlocutors that even such a loyal friend is not knowledgeable about Israeli affairs and has no idea of the gravity of the security situation along the borders. Only after he had heard from Dayan about the serious incidents along the frontier and the army's inability to deploy soldiers all along the line, about the ineffectiveness of the Arab Legion, which has not lifted a finger to prevent such actions, and of the composition of the population of the new settlements and the effect upon them of these murderous infiltrations did he begin to see operations along the frontier, including Qibya, in a totally different light. He asked why Israel had never brought the matter to the notice of the American government. Dayan recounted all Israel's appeals, both at home and in Washington, for the United States to make representations to Jordan, as well as Israel's warnings about the deterioration of the situation. To the best of Israel's knowledge, the State Department did nothing to apprise the Amman government of the gravity of the situation. Javits proposed that a congressional delegation visit Israel to learn about the situation at first-hand and then to educate American public opinion, and especially Congress, as to the true state of affairs. Evron recommends that Israel support Javits's proposal.

Notes

1. See No. 474.
2. See No. 449 (Editorial Note).

516. Meeting: M. Dayan–H. Byroade (Washington, 18 November 1953)

Report: 93.08/357/49

Dayan was accompanied by Chaim Herzog (who wrote the report), Byroade by Waller.

Byroade said that the goal of the U.S. Government is to defuse tensions in the region to the extent possible. He asked Dayan how he views future relations between Israel and Egypt. Dayan answered that Egypt does not constitute a problem along the borders as long as its government decides not to intervene in Israeli affairs. Problems along the border with Egypt, in

particular the Gaza Strip, are more the result of Egyptian neglect than Egyptian initiative. They are so busy with internal problems that they pay no attention to what is going on in the Strip. There are no Egyptian forces along the border; as a result, infiltration is increasing steadily.

Byroade asked whether an Anglo-Egyptian accord or guerrilla warfare against the British would constitute better circumstances for an Israeli-Egyptian settlement. Dayan replied that, in all circumstances, Egypt would be in no hurry to make peace unless subjected to significant and unrelenting international pressure. Byroade noted that Naguib's continuation in power is strongly dependent on American aid; hence the U.S. government can put pressure on him to make peace. Dayan reiterated that without such pressure the Egyptians would not take a single step towards an accord with Israel. He added that there are few outstanding problems between Israel and Egypt, other than the refugee issue.

Dayan raised his own private and unofficial proposal for the erection of an illuminated and mined fence along the entire frontier. He asked whether the Americans would help finance such a barrier, using military assistance funds. Byroade replied that his government has no interest in building iron curtains anywhere in the world. Dayan countered that the choice is between such a fence and the current situation along the borders. In his opinion, Egypt would agree to such a proposal, which would allow it to devote its full attention to domestic problems. Byroade evinced interest in this argument and said that an approach by both parties would be a precondition for such a plan. Dayan said that it does not matter who builds the fence; the main thing is that something be done to improve the situation. Byroade agreed that the proposal is interesting and merits investigation.

Dayan pointed out that there are currently no problems on the Lebanese and Syrian borders, where relative quiet prevails except for the water problem. Byroade commented that it is advisable to begin negotiations about the demilitarized zone. Dayan answered that Israel has already conducted negotiations but has been unable to reach an agreement. Israel is prepared to make many concessions, but not about water. The Syrians want access to the shoreline, though they have no need for it.

Byroade pointed out that the Benot-Yaaqov canal plan raises grave problems that impede implementation of the armistice agreements. He agreed that if Israel must receive Syrian consent to carry out projects in the area, this is tantamount to a perpetual veto on development work. On the other hand, there is a problem of sovereignty over the demilitarized zone. Israel, by its behavior there, is creating situations that are incompatible with the armistice agreement. Dayan countered that what is really going on in the demilitarized zone is that each side is looking out for its own people.

Byroade noted that this alters the nature of the armistice agreements. Dayan replied that when the agreements were signed, it was expected that they would be in effect for a period of one year. No one imagined that

they would still be in force five years later. Meanwhile, life in the demilitarized zone must continue and its inhabitants must be allowed contact with Israel. Byroade said that such a situation contains the seeds of the destruction of the entire armistice regime.

Dayan compared the situation during Riley's tour of duty to that under Bennike. Riley had been flexible and never asked for anything he knew was unfeasible. Bennike, on the other hand, is inflexible, which entails some risk. Byroade answered that the armistice regime must not be destroyed. The Syrians are entitled to express their opinion about what happens in the demilitarized zone. Dayan replied that were Israel to accept Byroade's view the Syrians would not allow Israel to do anything with the waters of the Jordan. In Dayan's opinion, Syria does not need the water. He finds it hard to understand why Byroade is so insistent on this point.

Byroade answered that Israeli diversion of the Jordan River and Jordanian diversion of the Yarmuk would merely increase the salinity of the Sea of Galilee; this is not a positive solution to water problems. Dayan replied that it is not such a bad solution; he pointed out the advantage of national development programs over international programs. Byroade did not accept this point of view; cooperation between the countries on the water issue could only lead to better relations and a rise in the standard of living along the border, and hence to a reduction in infiltration.

Byroade said that in recent months Jordan has made serious efforts to improve the situation along its border with Israel. Dayan disagreed. He contended that the Arab Legion and Jordanian police organize these bands of infiltrators. In his opinion, there is a need for a more fundamental solution, including the stationing of forces along the border, the construction of a fence, and mining a strip along the border. It is also necessary to move the refugees away from the border, as Lebanon had done.

Byroade asked whether the local commanders' agreements could be renewed.[2] Dayan countered that on this level, too, Jordan was refusing to cooperate—for example, by tracking infiltrators across the border. He said that ways must be found to prevent the problem in the first place rather than looking for ways to deal with it after the fact.

Dayan asked Byroade's opinion about the Mount Scopus issue. Byroade answered that he does not understand the problem, but has heard about it from Bennike's report. He added that Israel is disobeying the United Nations and destroying the UN supervisory apparatus, rendering the latter almost meaningless. The United States would work to support and strengthen the UN in the region and react with extreme severity to any disobedience to the UN apparatus.

Dayan described the situation on Mount Scopus and pointed out that Israel cannot agree that it be the only side that observes the agreement. Byroade replied: "We will support Israel in things in which we believe Israel to be right. No matter what the General might hear to the contrary,

we have no intention of endeavoring to win the friendship of the Arabs at the expense of Israel."

After the meeting, Waller advised Dayan and Herzog not to resume work on the Benot-Yaaqov canal until after approval of the Johnston Plan. This plan, to include the Benot-Yaaqov project, will be implemented at U.S. government expense. Johnston believes his plan will be approved.

Notes

1. Date of document: 25 November 1953.
2. See No. 256 and No. 553 (Editorial Note).
3. Compare the report on the talk in *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1423–26.
4. Johnston's second visit was delayed until June 1954.

517. Editorial Note

Consultation in the Prime Minister's Office on U.S. Military Aid, 18 November 1953

On 18 November, a consultation concerning U.S. military aid was held in the Prime Minister's office; participating were Sharett, Lavon, Chief of Staff Makleff, Kollek, Segan-Aluf Harkabi, and Shmuel Bendor. The meeting addressed the question of whether Israel should ask the U.S. government to allocate funds to finance the Beersheba-Eilat road as part of the military aid package. Sharett supported the request for an allocation to build infrastructure. In his opinion, there was no prospect of receiving arms and such a request was liable to justify the provision of arms to the Arabs. Furthermore, any arms deal would involve the dispatch of an American military mission, which would demand that IDF military secrets be divulged.

The IDF representatives did not accept his argument. They expressed a fear that such a request could torpedo Israel's campaign against providing arms to the Arabs. The American military mission that would examine the Eilat road would also inquire about other areas of activity; it would be hard to limit its purview; the delegation would not approve the proposed route and would interfere with existing plans. In sum, they believed that the sum Israel could obtain for the road did not justify the anticipated damage.

It was decided that for the moment Israel would not take any initiative, but would continue to vigorously oppose the supply of arms to Arab countries. The army would prepare a detailed list of arms and basic military installations it wanted to acquire, in case it were decided to submit a

request. (See Bendor to the Israel Embassy in Washington, 20 November 1953, 93.03/116/13; Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. 1, pp. 161–62.)

518. A. Nissan (Stockholm) to E. Najar. 19 November 1953

Copy: 130.02/2440/1

Nissan reports on Scandinavian reactions to the Qibya operation and the Security Council debate. The Danes evince a keen interest in events in Israel because of the important posts held by two Danish nationals: the UNTSO chief of staff and the president of the Security Council. Danish reactions to the Qibya incident were not marked by profound shock. In talks with Danish government leaders, Nissan has not heard a single word of criticism or expression of regret at what had happened. There was a similar reaction in Sweden. Israel's information campaign about the background to the event was well received in these countries.

Nevertheless, Nissan is cautious about drawing conclusions and writes that one must not infer from this that Israel's moral standing has not been damaged by the Qibya operation. His interlocutors' failure to express regret about or criticism of the incident was the result of their unwillingness to hurt their friends. The Swedish press's failure to give broad coverage to the serious charges leveled against Israel at the Security Council stemmed not only from a lack of interest in this forum, but also from an unwillingness to besmirch Israel's good name in public.

Nissan cites the example of the editor of a major Swedish paper, who told him point blank that he found it hard to believe that the Qibya raid was justified; he failed to understand why Israel had not raised the border security issue in the Security Council prior to the Qibya incident. Nissan believes that many people in Sweden think along the same lines, but have simply not said so openly.

Nissan reports on the recent visit to Scandinavia of Christiansen, the emissary of the Lutheran World Federation. Christiansen, who heads the Federation's assistance organization for Arab refugees, was conducting hostile propaganda under the patronage of the Syrian legation. In all his appearances he alleged that the State of Israel had solved the problem of Jewish refugees in Europe by creating a problem of Arab refugees and that the Arabs had fled the country because of Israeli terror. Nissan adds that he does not know whether Christiansen's ideas found fertile soil in Scandinavia, but the atmosphere following Qibya would make it easier for him to spread his propaganda.

Note

1. See No. 475 (Editorial Note).

519. E. Najar (New York) to W. Eytan. 19 November 1953

Coded Tel.: 172; Inc.: 130.09/2331/3

Based on a conversation with members of the French delegation to the General Assembly, Najar reports on the diplomatic activity of the three Western powers in connection with the Security Council resolution on Qibya.

(1) Selwyn Lloyd intervened at every stage of the draft, especially when he felt that Jebb was tending towards compromise. When he encountered opposition from the French delegation, he circumvented it via London and Paris.

(2) Until a certain stage, Lloyd insisted on condemnation of Israel; only at the end was he dissuaded. On the question of IDF responsibility, the British received full support from the Americans. The text of the second paragraph of Article A of the resolution was written in London and Paris because the French delegation in New York objected to its wording.

(3) Article B is a compromise. Selwyn Lloyd was strongly opposed to mentioning the problem of infiltration. Because of this opposition, Hoppenot was forced to cable Maurice Schumann to remind him of his promises to Israel and seek his intervention.

(4) Article C in the French draft spoke of a permanent peace. The Americans were opposed to this phrase and Paris was called in to decide.

(5) It was hinted to Najar that Selwyn Lloyd had presented the resolution on Qibya as a stage towards the regional defense plans.

(6) The British contend that the Security Council's evaluation of the general situation between Israel and the Arab states should not be included in its resolution on the Qibya incident. They hold that the Security Council's function is that of watchdog. The French hinted that in the Qibya incident Israel, through lack of forethought, had been ensnared by the tensions along the Jordanian border.

With regard to the Benot-Yaaqov canal, Najar reports that the French delegation's initial instructions from Paris were to support Syria. In light of Hoppenot's explanation of the true situation, Paris retreated to supporting Bennike's authority without actually opposing the project itself. Hoppenot and Vigier understand that there will be no hope for a direct settlement between Israel and Syria if the latter is successful in its current efforts. Najar adds that the British favor an immediate Security Council resolution on the incident itself, critical of Israel. Hoppenot will try to

have the issue referred back to Bennike. The draft resolution has not been drawn up yet.

Note

1. See No. 514 and notes there.

520. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 20 November 1953

Coded Tel.: WIA738; Outg.: 93.01/2209/8

Eban summarizes the situation in the UN corridors with regard to the debates on the Jordan River project:

(1) Israel has won a propaganda victory in the debate.[1] One no longer hears claims against Israel's basic position. Were the issue to be resolved on the basis of the arguments presented in the debate the resolution adopted would permitted work to continue, subject to guarantees of Arab lands and water rights in Buteiha.

(2) On the other hand, two secondary complications have not been eliminated: (a) The Powers' firm resolve to uphold Bennike's authority entails returning the matter to him for final arbitration. (b) The Americans believe that should it become necessary to give Israel some satisfaction regarding continuation of the project, this must be in return for partitioning the demilitarized zone on the lines agreed to in the negotiations with Syria several months ago.

(3) Due to these two complications, Israel is liable to face serious problems after the Security Council winds up its debate. There is some compensation, however, to be derived from Council's rejection of the principle that Syrian consent is indispensable.

(4) There are contradictions in the American approach to the issue. Although Dulles assured Proskauer that referring the matter back to Bennike is meant to find a solution and permit an early resumption of work, Byroade, in unofficial talks, toys with the idea of continued delay in order to extract some suitable *quid pro quo* from Israel, such as partition of the demilitarized zone.

(5) The State Department would like to postpone all work until February, when the fate of the Johnston Plan will become clear.

(6) Rumor has it that the British position on this issue, as on the border issue, will always be more hostile than those of its allies. The British attitude to the Jordan River project focuses not on the hydroelectric scheme, but on its subsequent stages: diversion of water from the Sea of Galilee and lower Jordan Valley, which lies in the Hashemite kingdom, to irrigate the

Negev. Were Britain persuaded that completion of the hydroelectric stage has no implications for the final character of the project, its opposition might be lessened.

Eban concludes from the foregoing that restrictions on Israeli sovereignty in the demilitarized zone leave work there at the mercy of other countries; Israel's desire to complete the project is not taken into account. Accordingly, he asked Blass whether the project can be implemented without involving the demilitarized zone. He believes that the mere existence of such an option could warn the Powers that they cannot paralyze Israel by invoking the demilitarized-zone weapon. Blass replied that, technically speaking, such an option exists, but would cost an additional three million dollars. Eban does not suggest renouncing work in the demilitarized zone; he does, however, view Blass's alternative as strengthening Israel's bargaining power for carrying out the work in the demilitarized zone. By presenting an alternative plan, Israel would be sending the State Department a message that it is determined to implement the hydroelectric project. Eban also suggests using the argument that the electricity project in the demilitarized zone would benefit its Arab residents. He proposes advancing the same argument to persuade the UN not to veto the establishment of a beneficial enterprise in the demilitarized zone. Eban hopes that once the State Department realizes that Israel is determined to implement the project, even without the demilitarized zone, it will relate more seriously to Israel and cooperate in seeking a solution acceptable to all parties.

In his speech at the UN, Eban alluded to Blass's solution; he believes the British and French representatives got the hint. Eban hopes that the outcome of the Security Council debates will make it possible to resume work in the demilitarized zone.

Notes

1. See No. 482. On 18 November, the Security Council held an additional debate on Syria's complaint. Eban called on the Council to allow work to continue in the channel of the Jordan. He pointed out that Syria's complaint had already caused complications for the project and considerable losses. He emphasized that the development work did not harm international, national, or private interests and that the project was vital for Israel's economic and political independence. Eban emphasized that it was extremely urgent that the work be resumed before the impending start of the rainy season. The Syrian representative repeated that Israel was not entitled to implement a development plan without prior consultation with the neighboring countries. He accused Israel of commencing work without the approval of the UNTSO chief of staff, who was responsible for implementing Article 5 of the Israel-Syria armistice agreement. See *SCOR*, 8th year, 639th meeting, 18 November 1953.
2. See No. 234 and n. 5 there.
3. See No. 468.
4. The reference is to 25 dunams (originally and erroneously said to be 28) in two plots

of Arab-owned land on the western bank of the Jordan River, on which excavations were planned in order to straighten the river bed and build a dam as part of the Hula drainage project. In the wake of the Security Council resolution of 18 May 1951 it was decided that excavations would be carried out only on a narrow strip of state land between the Jordan River and one Arab-owned plot and that the river would be diverted to flow around the second plot. See Vol. 6, No. 253.

5. Cf. No. 535.
6. The reference is to the opinion of three American water experts, reacting to the Main Plan. See their letter to Ben-Gurion, 4 November 1953, in File 130.02/3688/5, and S. Blass, *Water in Strife and Action*, pp. 190–91.

521. R. Shiloah (Washington) to the United States Division. 20 November 1953

Coded Tel.: WIA740; Outg.: 93.01/2209/8

Shiloah reports on the Eban-Byroade meeting that morning, in which he had taken part. Waller and Ludlow were also present. Eban began by broaching the subject of the Benot-Yaaqov project. He said that, after hearing his arguments, the UN delegations are persuaded of the justice of Israel's position.[1] In his opinion, Israel would have no reason for anxiety about the outcome were the issue debated on its own merits. Israel believes that a resolution affirming Bennike's authority and favoring continuation of the project, while guaranteeing the landowners' water rights, is the minimum that Israel has a right to expect in the current circumstances. These principles had guided the United States in the debate on the Hula dispute; Israel is now calling on the United States to stick to them. Eban said that experts consulted by Israel have declared conclusively that the Benot-Yaaqov project does not contradict the Johnston plan. If the Security Council refers the issue back to Bennike, it should be explicitly stated that this is in order to allow continuation of the project. Shiloah writes that, as usual, Byroade was evasive and got entangled in baseless arguments. He said that Israel's statement regarding its right to carry out work in the demilitarized zone is tantamount to a claim of sovereignty in the area. After Eban rejected this line of reasoning, Byroade raised the argument of military advantage. When Eban refuted that also, Byroade disputed Israel's right to divert water from the Jordan River to other regions in Israel. Eban replied that it will be some years before this fear can be realized; by then the regional water development plan will have been gained some ground. Should the Arabs reject this plan, there would be no alternative to unilateral enterprises. Only after all this did Byroade soften his tone somewhat and admit that the draft resolution has not yet been formulated. He said that the Americans will lay particular emphasis on Bennike's authority and

observance of the armistice agreement. In answer to Eban's request, Byroade promised to confer with Israel before the final draft is readied.

Eban and Shiloah conclude that there are two contending factions in the State Department. The first is willing to allow continuation of the project while affirming Bennike's authority; the other, represented by Byroade and his colleagues, is trying to make things as difficult as possible for Israel.

Shiloah and Eban went on to raise yet again the resolution on border security.[2] They protested its phrasing and warned vigorously of the malignant practical conclusions that would be drawn in the region about how the United States and the Security Council relate to security problems along Israel's borders. They asserted that the resolution gives Jordan a free hand and ignores Israel's defense needs. They particularly deplored the complete disregard of Israel's proposal to meet with the Jordanians. Byroade countered that his government believes the draft resolution is best fitted to current needs and circumstances. The U.S. government will make vigorous representations to Jordan to improve security. He argued that the only operative instructions this resolution would give Bennike are to improve defensive measures along the borders and to report back in three months.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 520, n. 1.
2. See No. 520, n. 6.
3. See No. 514 and n. 2 there.
4. See No. 507 (Editorial Note).
5. See the report on the meeting in *FRUS,* 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1426–31.

522. Ch. Herzog (Washington) to M. Makleff. 21 November 1953

Coded Tel: W743; Outg.: 93.01/2209/8

The telegram was sent also to Z. Dar, director of Israel Military Industries, to Shimon Peres, and to the Foreign Ministry. Herzog reports on a talk that he and Eban initiated with the U.S. assistant secretary of defense, Nash, on 20 November.

Eban reviewed U.S. overseas military procurement and noted the lack of clarity regarding utilization of the productive capacity of Israel Military Industries. He requested the following: a directive to clarify the situation and allow Israel to participate in the American procurement program; an allocation that would allow Israel's military industries to supply goods; and

an instruction to Col. Colby, who is in charge of overseas arms acquisition in Europe, to visit the Military Industries.

Nash agreed to Eban's requests. From the talk, it transpired that there has been no progress in the matter of military assistance, although Byroade has decided to release the allocation. The delegation that was supposed to leave for the Near East in September has been cancelled, because of opposition on the part of all U.S. ambassadors in the region, including in Israel.

Eban reviewed for Nash Israel's position in the UN debates. Nash dissociated himself from the State Department policy and noted the need to demand peace at every opportunity.

Notes

1. Nash was assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs.
2. See No. 339 and n. 1 there.

523. A. Eban (New York) to M. Sharett. 21 November 1953

Coded Tel.: 178; Inc.: 130.09/2331/3

Eban cables the following information:

(1) The prospects for the outcome of the debate on the Qibya resolution are not yet clear, but he supposes that the draft resolution will be adopted as it stands.[1]

(2) The British seem to be anxious about further pressure on the U.S. Administration, especially in view of the support expressed by the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* for Israel's position on negotiations to implement the armistice agreement with Jordan.[2] Byroade admitted that were Israel in a position to submit its proposal to the Security Council, his government would have to support it. Since Israel is not a member of the Security Council, however, his government does not have to relate to the Israeli proposal.

(3) Eban cautions against underestimating the impact of the Security Council resolution, especially when it comes to relations with the Arabs, who will use it as a pretext to avoid making peace. International support for Arab intransigence gives them an opening for increased arrogance and encourages their inclination to mount an international campaign against Israel. This inclination was repressed until the Qibya operation released it. Eban believes that if Israel fails to put the Arabs back on the defensive it can expect serious trouble, both from the Arabs and as a result of Great-Power intervention.

(4) The only effective means available to Israel for countering the Arabs'

diplomatic campaign and placing them on the defensive is to emphasize their refusal to sit down with Israel and advance towards peace, or at least to amend the shaky armistice agreement.

(5) The only way to convert Israel's tactical success of 12 November into a practical advantage is to forcefully repeat the proposal with regard to Article XII of the armistice agreement.[3] If the Jordanians reject the proposal, they can be accused of violating the last line of Paragraph 3 in Article XII.

(6) That article entitles Israel to demand a conference with the Arabs not only to discuss revisions to the armistice agreement but also to review its implementation.

(7) The Israeli initiative may have the following outcomes: (a) It might prevent a Security Council vote on the draft resolution, as happened to the pending resolution on Trieste, which has been shelved so as not to hinder the negotiations. (b) Even should the Qibya resolution be adopted, the Israeli initiative will garner support and sympathy. Expectations of a Jordanian reply would overshadow the Qibya resolution, detract from its importance, and tie Bennike's hands for the next three months. The Jordanians are not likely to make a positive response to the Israeli initiative, thus presenting Israel with a propaganda victory. Should they respond positively, the discussions can be focused primarily on Articles IV and VIII. (c) The Powers will be compelled to either support or reject the initiative; in the latter case they will be demonstrating the insincerity of their declarations of support for the armistice agreement, which they had championed during Security Council debates.

(8) Eban requests permission to ask the UN secretary-general to convene a conference between Jordan and Israel, either in Jerusalem or at UN headquarters, to review the status of the armistice agreement.

(9) In the interim, Eban and his colleagues will devote their energies to thwarting the passage of the resolution. To this end, they must submit protest notes to the three Western powers and lobby the other Security Council members to vote against the resolution. Eban believes that launching such a political offensive requires a positive slogan, such as support for Israel's peace initiative. A defensive campaign, focused on parrying condemnation of the Qibya operation, would not be sufficient.

(10) Experience has shown that Israel's diplomatic campaigns are successful only if Israel appears in the role of initiator, claimant, and accuser. He urges his colleagues not to miss "this momentous opportunity for changing at a stroke the unfavorable international atmosphere" that has prevailed during the last four weeks.[4]

Notes

1. See No. 514 and n. 2 there.

2. See No. 507 (Editorial Note).
3. See No. 531, paragraph 4; see also Vol. 3, Appendix H.
4. Sharett was enthusiastic about Eban's proposal, which was approved by the Ministerial Committee on Foreign Affairs and Security on 23 November (for the text of decision, see File 43/4056) and conveyed that same day in a note to the UN secretary-general (No. 531). Cf. No. 568 and n. 3 there.

524. Meeting: H. Berger–S. Tsarapkin (New York, 21 November 1953)[1]

Copy: 93.03/3007/5

Berger opened the meeting by raising the Qibya issue. He pointed to three striking flaws in the draft resolution submitted by the Western powers: (1) It is one-sided, does not mention the many Jewish victims, and mentions only the Arab victims at Qibya. (2) It confirms Jordan's claim that it has fulfilled its duty to act to prevent infiltration. (3) It fails to remind the parties of their obligation to begin peace negotiations.

Tsarapkin replied that the draft alluded to the Jewish victims inasmuch as it defined the Qibya operation as an act of retaliation. Berger agreed that it was possible to interpret the resolution in this way; since, however, there was no explicit mention of the murders, terror incidents, and attacks against Jews, one might think that the retaliation was for lesser acts. Tsarapkin disagreed with Berger's assessment and insisted that "retaliatory action" implies that it was preceded by serious incidents.

Tsarapkin added that the request that the Jordanian government continue and intensify its activities to prevent infiltration reflects the fact that its past actions had been inadequate.

Berger did not accept Tsarapkin's interpretation. He said that the draft resolution was a British initiative, and its forceful wording was prompted by their interests, such as the ambition to expand their bases in Jordan should they be forced to abandon the Suez Canal. It was no happenstance that the British commander of the Arab Legion repeatedly refused to guard the border with Israel and claimed that the Jordanian government was not obliged to prevent infiltration. Only tension along this border was likely to lead to a Jordanian request to implement the pact with Britain and a beefing up of British forces in Jordan, perhaps even west of the Jordan River. The British insist that the resolution explicitly state that the Israeli army was responsible for the Qibya operation because this would strengthen the grounds for implementing the pact. To this end, they prefer a resolution affirming that the Jordanian government had acted in the past to prevent infiltration; nor are they interested in a call for peace.

Tsarapkin asked why Israel was so concerned by the possibility that the

British army might enter Jordan. Berger replied that Israel feared that in such a case there would be unrest along the border.

Tsarapkin inquired whether Berger was aware that the Arabs, too, were dissatisfied with the draft resolution and intended to propose amendments to it. Berger replied in the affirmative. As for the Syrian complaint, Berger said that Israel hoped it would be allowed to continue with the Benot-Yaaqov project while guaranteeing the rights of all residents of the area. Tsarapkin replied that the matter was extremely complex. On what grounds, he asked, did Israel claim sovereignty over the demilitarized zone? Berger said that Syria had no basis for asserting sovereignty over this area. Since there was no third party that could claim sovereignty, the only possibility was Israeli sovereignty. Furthermore, the demilitarized zone is situated within the borders of Mandatory Palestine, of which Israel is the natural successor. Tsarapkin replied that many things had changed since then, including new UN resolutions. Berger retorted that even under the 1947 resolution the area in question belongs entirely to Israel. Tsarapkin said that some areas not allotted to Israel by the 1947 resolution were under Israeli control. Berger countered that other parts of Palestine were under Jordanian or Egyptian control. He added that Syria had no legal title or right of possession in the demilitarized zone. He explained that Israel does not base its claim to be allowed to continue the project on the issue of sovereignty. The work is being carried out by a private company, not by the government. Just as the rights of the inhabitants of Buteiha must be safeguarded, so too the electric company has rights to be protected. According to its concession, the Palestine Electric Corporation has the right to carry out the works. Berger outlined the history of the electric company's concession. He pointed out that in 1951 the Security Council authorized work in the Hula on the basis of this concession. Tsarapkin answered that Berger's analogy between the Hula venture and the Benot-Yaaqov project was not valid as long as the Security Council had not adopted in respect of the latter a resolution similar to that on the Hula works. Berger explained that the analogy holds for the legal situation. If the legal status recognized in 1951 allowed no basis for Syrian intervention, neither was there any basis for Syrian interference in the present case.

At the end of their conversation, Tsarapkin told Berger that the Soviet Union supports peace. As for the vote in the Security Council, the issue was complex and required further clarification and thought.

Notes

1. Date of document: 2 December 1953.
2. See No. 514 and n. 2 there.

525. Editorial Note

Government Meeting on the Qibya Operation and Ben-Gurion's Statement Broadcast on Israel Radio, 22 November 1953

Sharett reported to the Government on the Security Council debate on the Qibya operation. He read out the text of the draft resolution submitted by the Three Powers and the amendments proposed by Israel's delegation to the UN (see No. 514 and n. 2 there). He proposed that the Government respond by a public statement to be issued immediately after the Security Council had adopted its resolution. Ben-Gurion proposed issuing the statement prior to the adoption of the resolution, in reaction to the Three-Power draft. He wanted the statement to include the following points: (1) to stress Britain's responsibility for the situation that had evolved along the Israel-Jordanian border; (2) to call into question the veracity of Bennike's report on the operation; and (3) to insist on Israel's right to defend itself.

Sharett disagreed with Ben-Gurion. After Ben-Gurion explained that he wished to read the statement himself, as a sort of personal statement, and not have it delivered by the government spokesman, the Government accepted his position. By a vote of 7–5 it decided that the statement would be issued prior to the Security Council's adoption of the resolution. Ben-Gurion drafted the statement, which was approved by the Government after the inclusion of a number of amendments proposed by various ministers.

That same evening, Ben-Gurion delivered his statement over the radio. After reading out the text of the draft resolution that the Three Powers had submitted to the Security Council, Ben-Gurion said that the Government of Israel considered itself duty-bound to declare the following:

> (1) We vigorously question the veracity of the report that Gen. Bennike submitted on the Qibya affair, on which the Three Powers based themselves when they attributed responsibility to the armed forces of Israel.
>
> (2) The Powers' proposal clearly discriminates between [Jewish] blood and [Arab] blood. While they censure Israel for the Qibya action, they cover up, through their silence, all the murders that took place before Qibya and after it, which were perpetrated by the armed forces of Jordan, and several of them by members of the Arab Legion. The clear significance of this cover-up in the Powers' proposal is that they do not view such murders of Israeli civilians by Jordanian armed forces as a violation of the armistice agreement, a contradiction of the United Nations charter, or a danger to peace.
>
> (3) Even if it is not their explicit intention, this proposal by the Three

Powers, must of necessity encourage murderous onslaughts by armed forces from Jordan, whether members of the Arab Legion or other armed forces. No one knows better than the English government, which holds the purse-strings of the Legion and whose officers command it, that the Arab Legion and the government of Jordan did not take effective measures to prevent the rash of robbery and murder that has been going on for more than four years and whose result is that hundreds of Israeli citizens—men, women, children, and old people—have been killed. England, which insists on its right to plead on behalf of its Jordanian ally, cannot escape the responsibility that its status in Jordan places upon it.

(4) The Government of Israel notes with astonishment and dismay that in their proposal the Three Powers have totally disregarded the fundamental principle of the UN Charter and the main objective of the armistice agreements, namely, the establishment of peace in the Middle East, and have not called on the interested parties to negotiate directly to this end. The Government of Israel cannot view such an oversight as anything other than an extremely distressing and worrisome example of appeasement towards the Jordanian government and towards other members of the Arab League, who openly declare that they are for war against rather than peace with Israel.

There is no doubt that this proposal by the Three Powers lends extra force to the rejection of peace by Jordan and other Arab countries.

(5) The Three Powers' proposal directly and indirectly strengthens the hands of the belligerent forces in the Arab countries, particularly Jordan, to continue tormenting Israeli citizens along the borders. Even when we were a stateless people in the Diaspora we knew how to protect our lives in every place where the state did not do so. The State of Israel views as its main duty the protection of the lives of its citizens; the absolution that the Three Powers' proposal, for whatever reason, gives to the murders by gangs from across the border in does not detract from this duty. Our children and our wives will not be abandoned to murderers coming from Jordan or any other Arab country. The UN commissions have never brought the blood shed in Israel before the Security Council. This is not a "crossing of the demarcation line by unauthorized persons," as the Three-Power draft defines the bloody assaults from across the border, but guerrilla warfare that is planned or tolerated by the Jordanian government and other Arab governments. In my broadcast of 19 October 1953 on the Qibya incident I stated clearly that the Government of Israel regrets any innocent blood shed anywhere. But it is our duty to declare that we shall take all justified means to ensure that Israeli blood, too, shall not be cheap.

526. M. Sharett to E. Elath and A. Eban (telegram). 22 November 1953

Notes

1. The meeting took place on 20 November.
2. See No. 514 and n. 2 there.
3. As Sharett wrote in his diary, "They added the sin of preventing resumption of the work to the crime of the one-sided condemnation" (M. Sharett, *Personal Diary,* Vol. 1, p. 173).

527. Note from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the British Embassy in Tel Aviv. 23 November 1953

Notes

1. See No. 404.
2. See No. 424.
3. In its reply, the British government stated that it was powerless to reverse the oil companies' decision to cease supplying oil from Kuwait to the Haifa refineries (30 January 1954, 93.04/39/12).

528. Z. Argaman (Moscow) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 23 November 1953

Coded Tel.: 4; Inc.: 130.09/2325/6

Argaman reports on a meeting with Komikin, the Soviet deputy minister for foreign trade. Also present were the director of the Middle East Trade division in that Ministry and the Israeli commercial attaché. The talk revolved around ways of expanding trade between the two countries and the form it would take. Komikin stressed that in recent years trade with Israel had been one-sided, whereas it should be reciprocal. He found most Israeli goods suitable for import, especially textiles. The Soviets are more than willing to have intergovernmental delegations discuss a trade agreement or pact. He proposed that the discussions take one of two forms: (1) A committee of experts, followed by an intergovernmental delegation; (2) a mixed committee of bureaucrats and experts that would conduct negotiations in a single stage. He proposed submitting a written nonbinding memorandum. After the Israelis decide on the form the negotiations should take, he will bring the issue before his minister and the government. Argaman asks the Ministry to cable a reply as soon as possible.[1]

Note

1. In his reply, Bartur congratulated Argaman on his achievement and told him that Israel was extremely interested in negotiations between government delegations that included experts. He asked him to clarify what goods were negotiable and in what conditions (telegram IQA6, 25 November 1953, 130.09/2325/5; this file contains correspondence that includes details on subsequent discussions with the Soviets).

529. D. Ben-Gurion (Tiberias) to M. Sharett. 23 November 1953

Copy: IMDEA 230.72/2188

Ben-Gurion wishes to clarify whether, as Dayan claimed, Eban had not carried out the Government's instructions to lodge a complaint with the Security Council over Jordanian violations of the armistice agreement (access to Mount Scopus and the Mount of Olives, etc.). "If this is so, it is a grave error that must be remedied immediately." He adds that, in his opinion, the Government's instructions must be followed and the complaint lodged: "better late than never."[2]

Notes

1. On 18 October; see No. 444 (Editorial Note).
2. See No. 449 (Editorial Note).
3. Israel had in fact submitted the complaint on 20 October (see No. 457). Sharett replied to Ben-Gurion that Israel had lodged the complaint, that the complaint had been attached to an item that was already on the agenda, and that Eban had addressed the Council in the spirit of the Israel complaint. Israel could not, however, submit a draft resolution on the basis of the complaint, because it was not a member of the Security Council. (See memorandum from Sharett to Z. Shek, 24 November 1953, 130.02/2405/3; cf. M. Sharett, *Personal Diary,* Vol. 1, p. 178.)

530. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 23 November 1953

Coded Tel.: MTA64; Outg.: 130.09/2377/1

Eytan informs the mission heads that it has been decided to take the offensive and mount a diplomatic campaign on Qibya. He tells them of Israel's request that the UN secretary-general convene a conference between Israel and Jordan in accordance with Article XII, Paragraph 3 of the armistice

agreement.[1] He explains that if the Jordanians agree, Israel will only benefit and realize its goal of direct negotiations. Should the Jordanians refuse, Israel would accuse them of violating the agreement and none of the Powers could support their position. In either case, Israel hopes that this step will mitigate the fury over Qibya, as reflected in the draft resolution submitted by the Powers.

He instructs Israel's representatives to use all means at their disposal to explain the Israeli initiative. They should explain that it is in line with Israel's firm belief that direct talks are the only effective means for reaching a settlement. They should add that since Jordan had not agreed to Israel's proposal for talks at UN headquarters and the Powers had failed to endorse it, and since Israel viewed the Powers' proposal as a retreat from the Security Council's calls for peace and a blow to any prospects for a settlement, Israel had decided to take this decisive measure that would oblige Jordan to participate in a conference.

If Jordan accepted this invitation, there would be prospects not only for an easing of tensions along the border, but also of a turning point in Israel-Jordan relations.

Notes

1. See No. 531.
2. See No. 534 (Editorial Note).
3. See No. 509.

531. Note from A. Eban to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. 23 November 1953

Notes

1. See No. 507 (Editorial Note) and No. 509.
2. The document was circulated at Eban's request and given the designation UN document S/3140.
3. On Sharett's complaint over the use of the term "permanent peace," see No. 532.
4. For details on the Eban-Hammarskjöld conversation, see No. 600; for the official reaction by the United States and Great Britain, see Nos. 540 and 577.

532. M. Sharett to A. Eban (telegram). 24 November 1953

Notes

1. See No. 531.

2. Eban angrily rejected Sharett's rebuke and explained that he could not change the wording of Article XII, which explicitly called for a transition to "permanent peace." (See Eban to Sharett, telegram X200, 25 November 1953, 130.09/2331/3; compare M. Sharett, *Personal Diary,* Vol. I, pp. 181, 191, and 198.)

533. G. Avner (London) to W. Eytan. 24 November 1953

Coded Tel.: L148; Inc.: 130.09/2319/5

Avner informs Eytan that Israel's comments on the draft Security Council resolution, following the lines proposed by Eban, have been submitted to the director of the Levant Department in the British Foreign Office.[1] He has also notified the British diplomat of Israel's initiative for a conference with Jordan, in accordance with Eban's letter to the UN secretary-general.[2] With regard to the draft resolution, the Whitehall official said that the British are satisfied with the draft and would not agree to change it, for the following reasons: (1) The Security Council is not a commission of inquiry, but more in the nature of a policeman whose task is to apprehend criminals and give them a thrashing so as to eliminate an immediate threat to peace. (2) It might be that his country was adopting a short-sighted policy. But the Qibya incident had so infuriated the Arabs that it has become impossible to make any fundamental progress. (3) The text of the resolution speaks of infiltration as a deplorable phenomenon, but it also reflects the Powers' view that the Qibya incident was an atrocity that must be condemned even if it followed acts of infiltration. (4) The British definitely favor peace, but it is neither worthwhile nor diplomatic to declare this in every situation. When they had supported direct peace negotiations in the past, the Arab world maligned them. In the future, too, they would again speak of the need for peace. After Qibya, however, any mention of peace would only trigger a harsh Arab reaction with no chances for opening negotiations. The Arabs have declared that any call for peace negotiations after Qibya, unaccompanied by a condemnation of the act, would be adding insult to massacre. In the future, in a more favorable climate, the British would again call for peace.

As for the conference, he told Avner that the Jordanians would almost certainly agree to participate. The Jordanian government had already told the British that it was prepared to meet with Israel in Jerusalem, in the presence of Bennike. Britain supports the idea of a conference. As for infiltration, they do not know what more Jordan could do to prevent it. It is doing its best, and the British are continuing to exert pressure to this end. Infiltration stems from the situation of the refugees. It is difficult to conceive that it could be completely eradicated along such a lengthy border.

Avner enumerated the steps Israel believed Jordan could adopt. He added that infiltration had nothing to do with the refugees and was in fact a deliberate political tool for harassing Israel. The director of the Levant Department repeated that Israel's initiative would not shunt aside the draft resolution in the Security Council. Without a condemnation of Qibya, Arab fanaticism would only intensify and a climate favorable to a settlement would not be created.

Notes

1. See No. 514 and n. 2 there.
2. See No. 531.
3. See No. 512.

534. Editorial Note

Security Council Resolution on Qibya, 24 November 1953

On 24 November, at meeting 642, the Security Council approved, by a vote of nine to zero, with two abstentions (Lebanon and the Soviet Union), the draft resolution submitted by the three Western Powers (UN Document S/3139 Rev. 2):

The Security Council,

Recalling its previous resolutions on the Palestine question, particularly those of 15 July 1948, 11 August 1949, and 18 May 1951 concerning methods for maintaining the armistice and resolving disputes through the Mixed Armistice Commissions,

Noting the reports of 27 October 1953 and 9 November 1953 to the Security Council by the Chief of Staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization and the statements to the Security Council by the representatives of Jordan and Israel,

A.

Finds that the retaliatory action at Qibiya taken by armed forces of Israel on 14–15 October 1953 and all such actions constitute a violation of the cease-fire provisions of the Security Council resolution of 15 July 1948 and are inconsistent with the Parties' obligation under the General Armistice Agreement and the Charter;

Expresses the strongest censure of that action which can only prejudice the chances of that peaceful settlement which both Parties in accordance with the Charter are bound to seek, and calls upon Israel to take effective measures to prevent such actions in the future;

B.

Takes note of the fact that there is substantial evidence of crossing of the demarcation line by unauthorized persons often resulting in acts of violence and requests the Government of Jordan to continue and strengthen the measures which they are already taking to prevent such crossings;

Recalls to the Governments of Israel and Jordan their obligations under Security Council resolutions and the General Armistice Agreement to prevent all acts of violence on either side of the demarcation line;

Calls upon the Governments of Israel and Jordan to ensure the effective co-operation of local security forces;

C.

Reaffirms that it is essential in order to achieve progress by peaceful means towards a lasting settlement of the issues outstanding between them that the Parties abide by their obligations under the General Armistice Agreement and the resolutions of the Security Council;

Emphasizes the obligation of the Governments of Israel and Jordan to co-operate fully with the Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision Organization;

Requests the Secretary-General to consider with the Chief of Staff the best ways of strengthening the Truce Supervision Organization and to furnish such additional personnel and assistance as the Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision Organization may require for the performance of his duties;

Requests the Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision Organization to report within three months to the Security Council with such recommendations as he may consider appropriate on compliance with and enforcement of the General Armistice Agreements with particular reference to the provisions of this resolution, and taking into account any agreement reached in pursuance of the request by the Government of Israel for the convocation of a conference under Article XII of the General Armistice Agreement between Israel and Jordan.

(*Yearbook of the United Nations,* 1953, pp. 223–24)

535. G. Rafael (New York) to W. Eytan. 25 November 1953

Coded Tel.: 197; Inc.: 130.09/2331/3

Rafael reports on a meeting with George Barnes.

(1) The American water plan (the Main Plan) is the linchpin of U.S. policy in the Middle East. Despite the coolness with which it was received, the State Department will begin exerting political pressure in Arab capitals in

advance of Johnston's anticipated visit in February. (2) He did not deny Israel's legal right to carry out work on the Benot-Yaaqov canal. (3) From an engineering point of view, the American plan does not conflict with Israel's. (4) The State Department is delaying Israel's work on the project for political reasons, so as not to jeopardize the chance that Shishakli will accept their plan. (5) American policy is to avoid an open failure of the Syrian complaint in the Security Council by referring the matter to Bennike and calling for the elimination of the demilitarized zone. Barnes noted that Vigier informed the UN Secretariat and Johnston that his negotiations with the Syrians had been on the verge of a successful conclusion, but failed because of impatience and unwillingness to make minor concessions.

Rafael parried that Israeli work on the project would be Johnston's best tool for winning Shishakli's agreement to regional cooperation. Only the pressure of continued work could bring Syria round to a direct settlement with Israel. Hence the Security Council resolution must not include a call for negotiations or disregard Israel's right to carry out the project. On the other hand, so as not to aggravate the situation, Israel would consider the possibility of referring the issue back to Bennike, provided there were an explicit agreement involving Israel, the United States, and Bennike that he would agree to continuation of the project with safeguards for land rights. As for water rights, Israel would undertake not to divert the Jordan River for a certain period, during which arrangements could be made to guarantee these rights. Barnes agreed to Rafael's formula and promised to recommend it to Johnston and the State Department and to arrange a meeting of all interested parties.

At the close of the conversation, Rafael warned Barnes of the threat to the regional water plan and regional security should the United States disregard Israel's rights in the demilitarized zone. He added that, after passage of the Qibya resolution, Israel could hardly be expected to accept a second resolution intended solely to appease Syria at Israel's expense.

Notes

1. See No. 452, n. 2.
2. See No. 436 and n. 2 there, and No. 478 and n. 4 there.

536. R. Shiloah (Washington) to the United States Division. 25 November 1953

Coded Tel.: WIA753; Outg.: 93.01/2209/8

Shiloah reports on Eban's meeting with Dulles. Also present were

Byroade, Bedell Smith, and Waller. The talk lasted an hour and a half. Eban described the worsening security situation in the region and presented Israel's actions under Article XII[2] as an attempt to prevent a further deterioration in regional security. He added that the Security Council debate, the text of the draft resolution, and the total disregard of Israel's proposal for a meeting with the Arab states have made things worse. Hence Israel has been forced to take the extreme measure of calling for the parties to meet in accordance with Article XII. Eban continued with a mordant analysis of the draft resolution, castigated the severity of the condemnation, which has no precedent in UN terminology, and argued that the greatest harm done by the resolution is the retreat from a public call for peace. He described the resolution as a victory for the declared Arab policy of not making peace and avoiding direct meetings. The armistice agreements called for a transition to peace and mandated direct negotiations; if the Western powers bow to the pressure to refrain from calling on the parties to make peace, there would be no alternative to invoking Article XII.

Dulles said that the Administration continues to aspire to closer and friendly ties with Israel. Hence he would speak frankly and tell Eban things he would never dream of saying in the absence of friendly relations and mutual trust. Such a conversation is unthinkable with a representative of any other Middle Eastern country. One of the problems faced by the Administration is the enthusiastic and unusual activity of American citizens on behalf of Israel, which creates the widespread impression, particularly in the Arab world, that the Administration's decisions derive from domestic pressure rather than from germane considerations. The Administration seeks an American policy that reflects friendship for Israel and a desire for peace and stability in the region, a peace that would guarantee the cultural and material interests of the U.S. government. Were the Administration to change its decision in the wake of Eban's argument, it would be widely interpreted as a surrender to Zionist pressure. Sometimes he even believes that Israel's repeated successes in the United States could work against it. It is vital that the world realize that the Administration acts in the American interest.

Eban dwelt briefly on the nature of a democratic society and the right of segments of the population to try to influence their elected government. It is unthinkable that Israel be punished because some American citizens believe that its demands are just. Israel merits having every matter affecting it judged in its own right.

Dulles said that after returning from his Middle East tour he had hoped for a six-month respite and calm in the region so that the American government could begin the gradual implementation of its plans for the area, which he believed would also meet with Israel's approval. But Israel, whether deliberately or otherwise, adopted measures indicating that it does

not support this approach, including the decision to transfer the Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem, the conflict with the Syrians, and the Qibya incident. Despite the gravity of the situation, the State Department aspires to the most cordial and intimate relations with Israel. The candor of the current conversation is one example of this.

Dulles admitted that had he seen the proposed resolution in time he would have drafted a better version. He reprimanded Byroade for not having given Israel an opportunity to comment on the draft resolution before it was made public. Byroade, obviously at a loss for words, muttered something in reply. Dulles related positively to the proposal to hold a meeting under Article XII, but said that Israel had chosen the wrong time. He expressed concern that Arab leaders who agreed to participate would risk assassination. Nevertheless, he promised to back the proposal. Byroade said that he believed the Jordanians would respond in the affirmative.

Notes

1. The reference is to the draft resolution submitted by the three Western powers (see No. 514 and n. 2 there). The meetings with Murphy and Dulles took place before the draft resolution was adopted by the Security Council (see No. 534, Editorial Note).
2. See No. 531, especially paragraphs 4 and 5.
3. See No. 508.
4. See Eban to Sharett, telegram 198, 25 November 1953, 130.09/2331/3.
5. See No. 537.

537. A. Eban (New York) to M. Sharett. 25 November 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2331/3

Eban adds his assessment of the meeting with Dulles[1] and comments on the results of the invitation to Jordan.[2]

(1) The UN secretary-general and the State Department were dumbfounded by Israel's bold action. Eban believes that in America this decisive initiative is perceived as a political act of enormous consequence and a demonstration of diplomatic independence in a time of trial.

(2) There are signs that the State Department regrets not having seized on Israel's first proposal,[3] which was less extreme and more considerate of Jordan. One version circulating in the State Department is that Jordan did not totally reject Israel's initial feeler and Israel quickly forced it into a more uncomfortable position. In other circles, the Arabs are being told that had they accepted the inclusion of a general call for peace in the Qibya

resolution they might never have found themselves in their present predicament.

(3) Dulles was impressed by his perusal of Article XII, of whose existence he had apparently been unaware. Eban added explanations of its advantages: a meeting between the two parties without mediators; a meeting with each Arab state in isolation, rather than with all of them together; the obligation to attend the meeting without the Arabs' being able to demand something in return for their participation. The only basis for discussions is the armistice agreement, not General Assembly resolutions. Dulles and Bedell Smith expressed surprise that Israel had not employed this powerful weapon sooner.

(4) Although the State Department and the British are duty-bound to support this initiative, there is no doubt that they are considerably angered by the fact that they have lost the initiative. There is also serious concern about the fate of the Jordanian government, which now faces the test of violating the armistice agreement or risking its domestic position and the lives of its leaders. All this notwithstanding, Dulles will apparently accept Eban's proposal that the United States, through Lodge, applaud Israel's initiative in the United Nations. Bennike, too, has been relegated to the sidelines by this initiative.

(5) The Arabs are very concerned about this sudden loss of the main thrust of their policy—their refusal to meet with Israel unless it makes concessions in exchange for their willingness to meet.

(6) One may expect that the Jordanians will attend the meeting but not participate actively, refusing to accept any Israeli proposals and submitting none of their own: in short, to hamstring the meeting. In this fashion they would seek to neutralize the practical value of Article XII, which they consider to be dangerous. Eban is concerned about such a Jordanian tactic.

Notes

1. See No. 536.
2. See No. 531.
3. See No. 509.

538. Editorial Note

Exchange of Notes between the Governments of Israel and the United States on Special Economic Aid, 25 November 1953

Following Stassen's announcement of the release of the grant-in-aid (see No. 493), an agreement on special economic aid to Israel, within the

framework of the American special economic assistance program to the Near East and Africa, was signed by the governments of Israel and the United States and came into effect on 25 November. The agreement included an exchange of notes, one of them signed in Tel Aviv by the chargé d'affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Israel, Russell, the other in Jerusalem by Foreign Minister Sharett. The principles and procedures whereby the aid was to be granted were the same as stipulated in the previous exchanges of notes, on 27 February and 13 August 1952 (see Vol. 7, No. 64, n. 1, and Editorial Note, Companion Volume, p. 196). This time, however, there was no mention of the American law under which the aid was granted, nor was there any mention of the amount or term of the aid. (See the text of the notes in *Kitvei amanah*, Vol. 4, No. 151, pp. 231–34; see also the United States Division to Washington, telegram 827, 20 November 1953, and telegram 837, 26 November 1953, 130.09/2309/15.)

539. A. Eban (New York) to M. Sharett. 26 November 1953

Orig.: 130.02/2440/1

Eban summarizes his assessment of the Qibya incident, especially the blunders, dangers, and lapses, the likes of which had not been made in connection with any operation since the establishment of Israel:

(1) Sending regular armed forces across an international border, without the intention of triggering a full-scale war, is a step that distinguishes Israel from all other countries. No other state acts in this way. It was this, rather than the heavy casualties, that shocked the world.

(2) Another blunder was the number of victims and the wild and unrestrained nature of the operation. But the world would have tolerated atrocities and murder, as it often does elsewhere, had they not involved violation of an international boundary.

(3) This operation was the first since the establishment of Israel with which world Jewry refused to identify, viewing it instead as a blow to the good name of the Jewish people.

(4) The operation had been carried out in a period of a rather tense international situation and when Israel's security policy along the frontier had become the main source of friction with the United States and England. Dulles viewed the raid as a deliberate and insolent response to his personal request that Israel review its defense policy. World opinion, too, was revolted. Even Deir Yasin had not prompted such horror, because there is no similarity between an action undertaken by dissidents during a struggle for national liberation and an operation mounted by a sovereign state that enjoys international recognition.

(5) One must certainly assume that a similar incident in the future would

trigger military intervention by the British and Americans, and might even lead to a UN-mandated operation, as in Korea. Such an Israeli operation could bring the country to the threshold of foreign occupation and loss of independence. Hence the Qibya operation must be defined as the greatest threat to national security since the end of the War of Independence.

(6) Reports coming out of Israel confirm the assumption that Israel obtained no local military advantage to offset these international disadvantages: infiltration continues. The assault on Qibya solved nothing.

(7) The great psychological and political encouragement the Arabs garnered outweighs the dread that the operation cast on local Arabs. In the final analysis, the operation encouraged rather than suppressed the foe.

On the basis of these assumptions, especially the fifth, Eban concludes as follows:

(1) Israel needs a military and security respite. Any initiative that could be interpreted as a confrontation with the West or the UN must be postponed or cancelled. Even if this entails restraint unjustified by the facts of a case, Israel must bow to circumstances out of global considerations.

(2) During this military respite, there must be a large-scale and public international diplomatic initiative aimed at switching from the defensive to the attack and from apology to accusation and demands. The main thrust of the information campaign should be Israel's readiness and the Arabs' refusal to advance towards peace. This is simultaneously Israel's strong and weak point.

(3) Jordan must be invited to a conference under Article XII and harried for every small failure to implement the armistice agreement, in particular Article VIII.

(4) A similar approach should be made to Egypt, based on the standard issues: lifting of the blockade, definitive demarcation of the border, and so on. The possibility of sending a vessel through the Suez Canal must also be investigated. Should the Egyptians refuse it passage, this must be held up as an overt violation of the agreement; the incident must be exploited as a lever in the diplomatic campaign with Egypt.

(5) The Jordanian border must be reinforced by preventive means such as a mined barbed-wire fence. Jordan's opposition to demarcation of the border must be ignored.

(6) An information campaign must be conducted throughout the year, on the lines of the Jerusalem campaign of 1950. Its objective would be to channel international wrath against the Arab governments for having abandoned the refugees and accepted UN funding on false and extortionate premises.

(7) Israel must disseminate the impression that the armistice regime has become obsolete. It cannot survive without progress towards peace or at least a basic improvement in the situation.

(8) Plans should be made for a new appeal to the Security Council, seek-

ing a resolution calling for a transition to peace within the framework of the armistice.

(9) As far as the water issue is concerned, a settlement must be sought with the UN staff based on the resolution to be adopted by the Security Council. It may be assumed that the resolution will neither confirm a Syrian veto nor an Israel military advantage as a result of the project; it would therefore leave an opening for a settlement. In no circumstances should unilateral action be taken in the demilitarized zone, since, in Eban's opinion, Israel can succeed in its water projects if it conducts the forthcoming negotiations with patience and intelligence.

540. *Aide-Mémoire* from the Government of the United States. 26 November 1953

Notes

1. See No. 531. The present *aide-mémoire* was transmitted to Sharett by the U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv.
2. For Sharett's answer, see No. 547; compare *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1437–39.

541. M. Makleff [Tel Aviv] to D. Ben-Gurion. 26 November 1953

Copy: IMDEA 230.70/2188

Makleff criticizes the decision to call for a conference with the Jordanians under Article XII.[1] In his opinion, invoking this article for such purposes is a grave error. He anticipates that it will redound to Israel's disadvantage. He does not believe that Article XII is the way to demand implementation of the armistice agreement. Such a demand must be brought before the Security Council. Article XII relates to discussion and rewording of individual sections of the armistice agreement and was included to enable either party to demand reconsideration and revision of any section of the agreement which, in its opinion, had not been implemented as intended.

Makleff fears that reopening Article VIII could lead to a new text that would be to Israel's disadvantage. Israeli sovereignty over Mount Scopus would not be confirmed. Should Israel be confronted by unacceptable proposals that it refused to adopt, it would be painted as spurning UN resolutions.

Makleff also fears that rephrasing Article VI of the armistice agreement

would lead to changes detrimental to Israel. He anticipates a demand to return the lands of the Arab border villages to their owners so they would not have to cross the border to cultivate them. This would cost Israel territory in the region of Qalqiliya, Tulkarm, and elsewhere.

Makleff requests an urgent discussion to prevent the complications he foresees from Eban's proposal.

Notes

1. See No. 531; cf. No. 523, paragraph G(2).
2. See No. 457.
3. For the responses to Makleff's memorandum, see Nos. 563, 568, and 574, and n. 1 there.

542. Editorial Note

Submission of a Note to the British Foreign Secretary, 27 November 1953

On 27 November, Elath handed Nutting the note to the British Foreign Secretary printed below. On this occasion, Elath reviewed for Nutting the security problems that Israel faced in the entire region. He said that Britain's position in the Security Council worried Israel, not only because it was one-sided and placed full responsibility for the Qibya incident on Israel alone, but also because it expressed a British refusal to face the future and deal with the problems that had led to Qibya. Elath expressed concern that Britain's policy, both in the Qibya debate and in its response to Israel's request regarding the negotiations with Egypt, reflected a systematic lack of consideration for Israel's vital security needs.

Nutting tried to extract a statement from Elath to the effect that Israel lacked confidence in Churchill's statement that Israel's interests would be safeguarded in the negotiations with Egypt. But Elath expressed full confidence in the British prime minister's statement and emphasized that it was for this very reason that Israel deserved a clear answer to the issues raised in the note. Nutting repeated that Israel had nothing to fear. At the end of the meeting he promised to take up the matters raised in the note and review Israel's arguments (Elath to Eytan, telegram L159, 27 November 1953, 93.04/41/4).

543. Note from the Israel Ambassador in the United Kingdom to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (London). 27 November 1953

Notes

1. See No. 483 and n. 1 there.
2. See No. 424.
3. In a reply, dated 29 December 1953, Britain rejected Israel's request and reaffirmed the Middle East policy stipulated in the Tripartite Declaration of May 1950 (93.04/41/4).

544. G. Rafael (New York) to W. Eytan. 28 November 1953

Orig.: 130.02/2381/11

Rafael communicates his thoughts on Israel's campaign at the UN after Qibya. As he sees it, Israel turned into a monster overnight. Its friends are now more remote and display a distinctly cool manner. He has never witnessed such a decline in Israel's international standing as was reflected in the Security Council debates.

He regrets that Israel's representatives in the world arena have failed to impress upon the Government that Israel's international standing is an integral part of its security. Rafael also rues the fact that the Government's total and almost pathological disregard of this principle could well bring the state to the brink of the abyss. This is the first time he has felt that Israel cannot rely on "help" from the Arabs and that Israel's policies work in favor of the machinations of the Arabs and their allies.

Rafael is concerned about the decline in the luster of Israeli diplomacy since the last consultation in Paris.[2] He believes that the Foreign Ministry has failed in the task it set itself at that consultation. He sees no hope for the future unless the Ministry makes a supreme effort to put a halt to the anarchy prevailing in Israel, which, in his opinion, is undermining the very foundations of the state's existence.

Rafael believes there are prospects that a conference with Jordan would succeed. This would help promote Israel's international standing and its relationship with the Arabs. The conference must be carefully prepared. The opportunity must not be allowed to pass by because its importance was underestimated.

Notes

1. A letter expressing appreciation of Rafael's reports and the delegation's efforts in its

struggle against all those people, "so few of whom are truly loyal friends" (130.02/2381/11).

2. See No. 356 and n. 1 there, and No. 365.
3. See No. 365, n. 12.

545. Sh. Eliashiv (Moscow) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 29 November 1953

Coded Tel.: 8; Inc.: 130.09/2325/6

Eliashiv reports that the publicity given to his arrival in Moscow caused much excitement among the Jews. Israeli legation staff who attended services at the synagogue sensed the excitement; they were plied with good wishes and expressions of joy. The synagogue, almost empty at first, filled up shortly after the delegation's arrival. The rabbi recounted that he had read the great news that morning and was at a loss for words to express his joy.

Note

1. Eliashiv returned to Moscow following the resumption of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Israel. For his presentation of credentials, see No. 579.

546. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Western Europe Division. 29 November 1953

Copy: 93.04/40/16

Tsur reports on his meetings at the French Foreign Ministry, with Divon also present. His talk with de Margerie, the deputy director-general of the Ministry, focused on the international situation and Security Council debates. De Margerie said that Israel should have swallowed the bitter pill of the Security Council resolution condemning the Qibya operation[1] and then let the matter be quickly forgotten. He expressed confidence that the resolution is merely a passing episode. Despite its harsh wording, in the final analysis it had not led to a deterioration in Israel's status, since the restitution of the American grant threw the Arabs into confusion and raised Israel's prestige in their eyes. De Margerie believes that Israel need not fear an Arab attack; according to information at his disposal, the internal situation in the Arab countries is not good. Egypt is upset by the suspension of the talks on the Suez Canal. Shishakli's regime in Syria is unstable. Jordan

is not presently prepared for conflict; even if it were, Britain would stop it.

De Margerie said that the idea of convening a conference with Jordan, under Article XII,[2] is a clever tactical step. By doing this, Israel is switching from the defensive to the offensive and gaining sympathy. He dismissed Tsur's comment that Israel could also expect concrete results from this step and held that the tactical gain as the main advantage.

In Tsur's meeting with de Courcelle, the director of the Africa and Levant Department, the latter said he believes that Jordan will have no choice but to meet with Israel, but with Bennike in the chair. He assumes that the Arabs will insist that the meetings be held in the Middle East and not at the UN.

He described the pressure that the French envoys to Arab countries had exerted on the Quai d'Orsay to have the Security Council adopt a pro-Arab resolution.

Concerning the Benot-Yaaqov canal, de Courcelle does not believe the Security Council will pass a resolution giving the Syrians the right to veto the project. On the other hand, he does think the Council will grant Bennike fairly broad authority to decide whether and in what conditions the project may be resumed.

He asked about the Johnston Plan. Tsur replied that though it has many shortcomings Israel is willing to consider it as a basis for negotiations. De Courcelle said that his government opposes the plan, which was devised without French participation and does not take his own views into account. In this context, it was again proposed to hold a consultation at the Quai d'Orsay on the issue of the Jordan waters, perhaps with the participation of Israel's hydrological expert, Simcha Blass.

Notes

1. See No. 534 (Editorial Note).
2. See No. 531.
3. See No. 436 and n. 2 there, and No. 452, n. 2.

547. M. Sharett to A. Eban (telegram). 29 November 1953

Notes

1. The meeting took place on 28 November.
2. Eban analyzed the American attitude (see No. 540) towards Israel's proposal to convene an Israel-Jordan conference under Article 12 of the armistice agreement and the policy to be adopted accordingly (27 November 1953, 93.01/2209/8).

548. G. Rafael (New York) to W. Eytan. 30 November 1953

Orig.: 130.02/2410/1

Rafael reports on contacts with Mahmud 'Azmi. At their last meeting, in August,[1] they had agreed that 'Azmi would inform Nasser and the Egyptian foreign minister of their conversation. 'Azmi maintained contact with Eban and Najar in New York; reports on this were sent to Jerusalem.[2] Rafael met 'Azmi several times in New York; Najar was present at some of these sessions. Rafael summarizes them as follows:

(1) Before the start of the Security Council debate, 'Azmi informed Israel's representatives, on behalf of his government, that Egypt had decided not to take part in the debates and to maintain a diplomatic truce with Israel. He explained that the Powers had not raised this issue in order to promote peace between Israel and the Arab states, or to help the Arabs against Israel, but to exploit the debate to fortify their own positions. The Americans and British had also tried to exploit the conflict at 'Auja[3] and had misled Egypt with false reports. Egypt's decision not to participate in the debate had influenced the other Arab countries, except for Jordan.

(2) There had been a chance that the Egyptian government would agree to a secret meeting with authorized representatives of Israel, but the 'Auja dispute, and especially the Qibya operation, had put paid to this possibility.

(3) The Egyptian government does not believe there is any chance of resuming the negotiations on the British evacuation of Suez before the results of the elections in the Sudan are known. Britain has pulled out all the stops to influence the election results in its favor. In such circumstances, the focus of the Anglo-Egyptian dispute could once again pass from the Suez Canal to the Sudan.

(4) 'Azmi believes that the British anti-Israel activity, exploiting the Qibya incident, reflects an idea of reviving the Bernadotte Plan.

(5) The Revolutionary Command Council and Foreign Ministry in Cairo noted with satisfaction the section in Eban's address to the Security Council in which he pointed out that Israel's demand for implementation of the Suez resolution does not stem from a wish to harm Egypt's legitimate interests; rather, Egyptian compliance with the Security Council resolution could further its claims. 'Azmi was asked to inform Israel of Egypt's pleasure with this statement.

(6) At their last meeting, on the eve of 'Azmi's return to Egypt, he said that the fundamental and key obstacle to an Egyptian-Israeli accord is his government's concern that the establishment of normal relations with Israel could further the development of competitive industry in Israel that might endanger the development of Egyptian industry. Hence Egyptian leaders believe it preferable to leave Israel isolated in the region.

Rafael replied that Israel is aware of this concern and relates to it seri-

ously. Israel believes that, on the contrary, cooperation would bring about mutual prosperity and development. Israeli economists have discussed the subject and worked out plans that demonstrate the advantages that would accrue to both countries from economic cooperation. Rafael suggested that 'Azmi tell his colleagues in Cairo that Israel is prepared to hold a meeting of economists from both sides for an exchange of ideas. Should such a consultation provide the groundwork for mutual trust, it could be continued on another level. 'Azmi concurred with the proposal and promised to send an answer by a special messenger, who will come to Israel in December.

(7) Rafael explained to 'Azmi that Israel is not interested in vague declarations by Egyptian leaders, conveyed through various channels, of their wish to live in peace with Israel. It wishes to test Egypt's true intentions through official, authorized, and secret contacts. He also cautioned 'Azmi against Egyptian envoys' drawing false conclusions from the current attitudes of the United States in the dispute before the Security Council. The strength of the Jewish lobby had been demonstrated on the issue of the grant, and more is forthcoming. In addition, a weak Israel is not in the American interest.[4]

Notes

1. See No. 362, paragraph 3, and n. 4 there.
2. See Nos. 372, 410, and 440.
3. See No. 481.
4. See No. 401, n. 2.
5. Rafael's report was passed to E. Sasson, who responded in a letter to Eytan dated 28 December 1953 (130.02/2410/1). The next report of a meeting with 'Azmi relates to that with Eban on 19 February 1954 (see Eban's telegram to Rafael, 20 January 1954, 120.09/2331/4; see also Rafael's instructions in advance of the meeting, 19 January 1954, 130.09/2339/1).

549. A. Eban to J. F. Dulles. 30 November 1953

Notes

1. See No. 536.
2. See No. 475 (Editorial Note).

550. Editorial Note

Statement by the Foreign Minister in the Knesset concerning the Security Council Resolution on Qibya and the Debate on the Statement, 30 November–7 December 1953

On 30 November, Sharett made a statement in the Knesset on the Security Council resolution concerning Qibya (see No. 534).

> Recently, two serious complications have arisen along the country's frontiers, one with Syria and one with Jordan; the first in the field of development, the second in the field of security. The roots of these two complications lie in the armistice regime under which we have been living for some five years now. This regime was originally established, as you well know, to serve as a short transitional stage from a state of war to a state of permanent peace. It was intended to serve not only as a barrier, an obstacle to the renewal of combat and hostile acts, but also as a bridge towards a final and comprehensive settlement. As you know, this did not come to pass. Out of a desire for vengeance, a vain hope of our succumbing, and a lack of civic courage, the Arab governments refused and still refuse to this day to make that transition. Moreover, they constantly seek to maintain a state of war with all the means at their disposal They even exploit the armistice regime as a means of warfare, as a battering ram with which to strike at Israel.
>
> Our confrontations with Jordan and Syria at the UN are merely links in a chain of campaigns imposed upon us by the aggressive schemes of the opposing party—this time military aggression on the part of Jordan and diplomatic aggression on the part of Syria. Our problem is how to preserve and maintain the armistice regime, in which we have an intrinsic interest and to which we solemnly committed ourselves before the United Nations, without prejudicing our security, on the one hand, or harming our development efforts, on the other.
>
> The wave of destruction and acts of murder by residents of Jordan in the border areas of the Sharon and the Jerusalem corridor are decisive evidence of the failure of the Jordanian government to fulfill its obligations under the armistice agreement. Recently this wave peaked in the killing of a mother and her two children in the village of Yahud on the night of 13 October. This atrocious and horrifying murder was the straw that broke the camel's back; on the night of 15 October, an attack was carried out against the Arab village of Qibya, situated across the border [from Yahud], in the course of which, according to Jordanian sources, several dozen people were killed, including—not deliberately, one may assume—many women and children.
>
> I do not intend to add to what the Prime Minister has said on this matter in his two statements broadcast to the public, in which he ex-

plained the sequence of events and expressed his regret, on behalf of the Government, for the innocent blood shed in this and in all other incidents.

In his address to the Security Council on 12 November, Israel's representative at the UN, Ambassador Abba Eban, said as follows:

The mood and background of the Qibya incident can only be understood in the light of this atmosphere in which our hard struggle for security and peace is conducted. In instructing me to portray this background as fully as possible the Government of Israel directs me, nevertheless, to state that it regards the loss of innocent life at Qibya with profound and unreserved regret. This was a most unfortunate explosion of pent-up feeling and a tragic breakdown of restraint after a provocation of brutal attacks such as the cold-blooded murder of a mother and her children in their sleep.

Nevertheless, it is my duty to point out to the Knesset that the attack on Qibya, with the substantial bloodshed it incurred, severely shocked world public opinion and gave rise to feelings of bitterness, anger, astonishment, disappointment, and sorrow towards the State of Israel in broad and various circles.

The fact that the sincere moral protests against the Qibya incident, whose gravity one can hardly exaggerate, have been exploited for pernicious political ends does not free us from the duty of considering it seriously.

Because of the Qibya operation, the three Western powers saw fit to censure Israel in the Security Council. Acting on the instructions of the Government, the Israel delegation at the UN responded to this step by submitting a complaint against Arab countries for their deliberate and systematic violation of the armistice agreement. In particular, the complaint castigated the responsibility of the Jordanian government for the attacks perpetrated by armed forces that infiltrated from its country into the territory of Israel and caused unremitting bloodshed in our border areas.

The Israel delegation invested much fervor, talent, and intelligence in describing the true situation and in apportioning blame where it is due. It had to do this while simultaneously facing a serious campaign on the second issue affecting Israel that was being debated in the Security Council--the development enterprise connected with the Jordan River in the northern border area—and also at the height of the UN General Assembly, at which issues in which Israel was vitally interested were also discussed. The Israel delegation did not merely castigate those responsible for the intolerable situation that had arisen. It also indicated a positive way out of the bind—a request that the other party enter direct negotiations to achieve peace and a final settlement.

The Powers that initiated the Security Council debate deemed otherwise. They dictated to the Council a draft resolution which, in the sheer

one-sidedness of its verdict, distortion of the situation, and blurring of the truth in apportioning blame, can hardly be paralleled in the annals of the UN.

This Security Council resolution, which is to serve as the central topic of the Knesset debate—as the Speaker has just announced—is studded with perversions of justice, discrimination, and disregard [for the facts]. It includes a censure of the Qibya incident, phrased in harsh language that has no peer in the annals of the Council. The Council has never used such language against Arab countries, when they invaded Israel in a war of extermination, when they consigned multitudes to annihilation, when they trampled the United Nations Charter under the feet of their troops, or when they publicly proclaimed their intention to tear up a solemn resolution of the General Assembly. The resolution does not contain a single word of condemnation of the hundreds of acts of bloodshed perpetrated by the Jordanians, including soldiers of the Arab Legion, acts of bloodshed whose relationship to any retaliatory action is like the relationship between a match thrown into a keg of gunpowder and the ensuing explosion.

In that resolution, the Jordanian government was the object not only of distinctly gentle language but also of detailed praise and an implicit expression of confidence. Last but not least, the resolution suffers from one gross omission: It includes no call for peace. For the first time, the Security Council has addressed this problem without turning its attention to ways of closing the breach that threatens security and stability in the region—without calling upon the parties to put an end to their conflict through a permanent settlement.

Consider well for how many severe problems and injustices the Security Council has made itself responsible through this resolution. It has discriminated between [Jewish] blood and [Arab] blood. It has concealed the root of the evil. It has disavowed its main function—to guarantee peace. It has demeaned itself and thereby demeaned the United Nations.

What happened here? Why did the Powers adopt this line, so conciliatory towards Arab states, so vindictive towards Israel, so disregardful of the major responsibility of the Security Council itself? Why did they refrain from condemning the other side? Why were they afraid to call the aggressive acts of murder perpetrated by the Jordanians by their true name? Why were they wary of requiring an Arab state to meet directly with Israel, even if only as a moral obligation?

This is not the first time that major world powers have tried to consolidate their status on unjust foundations; have preferred a narrow concern for their own particular interests over a broad perspective on international affairs; and have endeavored to win the friendship of those they think strong at the expense of those who are weak and dependent on their help. On more than one occasion, history has shown how far such an aberrant calculation can miss its target in the final reckoning.

The resolution did not solve the problem. It was no coincidence that it was not accepted by public opinion in the Free World, but spurred sharp criticism in the major newspapers of Washington, New York, London, and Paris. The world press raised questions that demand an answer. Who is responsible for the situation? What led to the Qibya incident? Was it not preceded by a long series of assaults against Israel from across the Jordanian border? Was not the Jordanian government obliged to step into the breach? What will happen if the measures that Jordan is adopting, according to the authors of the resolution, prove insufficient? What then would be the fate of the armistice agreement, whose inviolability the resolution upholds? Let us assume that the source of the evil is the refugee problem; what has been done to eliminate it once and for all, through a practical solution? When will clear-cut and absolute responsibility be placed on the Arab states to solve the problem that they themselves created? Above all, have the Powers renounced peace and stability as the aim of their policy in the Middle East? If they have renounced these aims, what is their policy goal today? And if they have not renounced these aims—and it is difficult to assume that they have—why have they refused to declare so on this grave occasion, when the deterioration in the security situation has justifiably terrified all those sincerely concerned for peace in the region? Let us suppose that the Arabs are adamantly opposed to meeting with Israel and distressed by any demand that they do so. Does stifling the demand promote any hope whatsoever of achieving peace? Is this not patent and explicit encouragement to become more firmly entrenched in their intransigence?

These questions cry out for an answer. We cannot force anyone to answer them. But their existence is incontestable. It is not our custom to sit idly by while waiting for answers. It is incumbent upon us to do everything that depends on us to thaw the situation and move towards a solution. In any case, we are obliged to make every attempt in this direction. The Security Council resolution taught us that our salvation will not come from others. This does not mean that we are unable to help ourselves. The encouragement that the resolution gave to those whose only objective is to destroy the armistice regime and harm Israel obliges the Government and the entire nation to be more on the alert in matters of security. But we are also cognizant of the possibilities of diplomatic initiatives in the international arena.

While the Security Council debate was still in progress we proposed a meeting between Israel and Jordan at UN Headquarters in order to thrash out a joint plan for restoring peace and security to the frontier. This proposal was rejected. Jordan refused to sit down with us in a special meeting and the Powers again showed special consideration for Jordan's sensibilities, even though this meant destroying any attempt to remedy the situation, whose dangers they had themselves trumpeted.

We decided, therefore, on a bolder step, and invited Jordan to a conference in accordance with Article XII of the armistice agreement. Invocation of this article obliges Jordan to respond and makes possible a just accounting with regard to the entire issue of the implementation of the armistice agreement. Jordan has to date exercised a free choice between those articles that it finds convenient to implement and other articles, which it has granted itself license to trample underfoot. Precisely because the Security Council seems just now to have added new validity to the armistice agreement, it is in our interest to exhibit to the United Nations and the world community Jordan's obligations, which have become a mockery. Before we weigh whether we should totally despair of the armistice agreements, we must exhaust all possibilities for ensuring their steadfast implementation. Peace cannot be compelled. True, it is a vital need for the entire region and for international stability on a broader scale; but peace cannot be established without good will on the other side.

It is also a complete illusion to assume that Israel cannot survive without peace. We exist and can survive without it for an unlimited time. Certainly it is a pity that there is tension, waste, and suffering to no purpose in the absence of peace. But if the leaders of the Arab regimes prefer all these calamities to peace, that is their affair. On the other hand, they must meet their obligations under the armistice agreements, and we in any case will not gloss over their failure to do so.

Jordan must respond now: Either it will come to the conference or it will be accused of a blatant violation of the armistice agreement. Jordan's allies and advisors would do well to adopt a position. Jordan in general, and perhaps its government in particular, must evince no less interest than we do in preserving peace and quiet along the border.

The Security Council concluded its debate on the border situation without any attempt to solve the problem. Our initiative is intended to fill the gap left by the Council; the fate of this initiative is still an open question.

There is another matter pending—the second topic of the Security Council debates during the past weeks: the future of our project to divert the Jordan River to produce hydroelectric power—an enterprise that is also linked to our irrigation plans for the future. I will not enter into detail here, both because they have been widely published and also because the issue is still being debated and no decision has yet been made concerning it. In this campaign, too, we have invested much effort. As before, we stand by our right to continue and complete the work we began. We have suspended it temporarily in order to give the Security Council some time to consider the problem in a calm atmosphere, just as previously we were prepared to halt work for a short while in order to allow the UNTSO Chief of Staff to clarify certain knotty points. We would, of course, prefer to resume work with the full agreement of the

UN. The only restrictions that we would be prepared to admit as justified, concerning the resumption of work, are those that would protect the rights of individuals. The touchstone of the sincerity and effectiveness of this guarantee would be the corroboration by a competent UN organ that it is satisfactory. We will not agree to require the consent of any other agency on this matter.

On the issue of regional water planning, which has arisen in the interim, we were the first to declare our readiness to sit down with our three neighbors with whom there are or might possibly be shared water interests—Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon—in order to consider and determine a regional settlement of water resources on the basis of just allocation and—if they wish—also to undertake joint planning of water use for irrigation and power production, for the good of all interested parties. As long as such a settlement does not exist, once again due to the refusal of our neighbors to sit down with Israel, we consider ourselves free and entitled to full use of the waters of the rivers that flow through our country. It is inconceivable that our development works should be prohibited or delayed until the neighboring countries deign to cooperate. Such a condition is tantamount to sounding the death knell for any development work in Israel that depends on using water sources in the north. On the contrary, we are convinced that the unimpeded continuation of Israeli development projects is the most effective way to bring about regional cooperation.

Finally, we are willing to examine in good faith any regional water plan submitted by any international actor. In this spirit, we promised and did in fact begin to study a proposal recently put forward in general terms by the government of the United States. Our method for studying such plans will be twofold: first, a thorough examination of the scientific and technical assumptions and data on which this plan is based, in light of the wealth of knowledge and experience we have accumulated and on the basis of the opinions of world-renowned experts in whom we have confidence; second, a firm insistence on the full quantity of water and power-production options that are necessary for Israel's economic development and very existence. The plan that has been submitted to us is seriously defective from these two points of view and from other perspectives as well. It is still being discussed.

All those interested in achieving cooperation in this field must be aware of one fact. Water, for Israel, is not a luxury, nor only a desirable and beneficial supplement to our natural resources. Water, for us, is life itself. Water is bread for the people—and not just bread. Without extensive irrigation enterprises, we cannot attain high productivity or a balanced economy or economic independence. But without irrigation, we cannot even begin to achieve an agriculture worthy of the name in our specific conditions. And without agriculture—developed and advanced agriculture—we cannot be a people rooted in its land, confident of its

existence, stable in its nature, commanding all the potential for material and spiritual creativity innate within it and which this country can open up before it.

This must be borne in mind by anyone coming to negotiate on water issues or by anyone who expects us to cooperate in implementing their plans.

I am referring, in particular, to the United States, which has the wherewithal to provide substantial and valuable assistance for the effective utilization of the region's water resources for the good of all interested countries and to use them to solve development and absorption problems. We need U.S. assistance and value it highly. But just as Israel will not renounce its freedom of policy and discretion, in return for American aid or any other aid, it will not be led astray by foreign aid in the present to the point of renouncing the prospects for long-term advancement and consolidation in its most vital areas.

If I may be permitted to summarize at this stage, when the issues being discussed are still in fluid form, I would say this. The problems that emerge from an analysis of the situation concerning our policy today in relation to all those issues I have already mentioned are: how to maintain the armistice agreements without their hindering or suffocating us; how to enhance our security,.to the extent possible, without adversely affecting the world's sympathy for us; how to acquire and make use of foreign aid without renouncing our independence; how to stand up for our most vital needs against forces that are immeasurably stronger than we are, when such a struggle is imposed upon us, without undermining the cordial relationships between ourselves and those forces. These are narrow paths full of obstacles, but we must get used to treading them in a way that leads us to our goal.

Sharett's statement was followed by a debate on the political situation. Opposition representatives (Herut on the right, Mapam and the Israel Communist Party [Maki] on the left) criticized the foreign policy of the Government of Israel since the establishment of the state and claimed that the Security Council resolution reflected the failure of its political line. The representatives of the left attacked the Government, each according to his own ideological perceptions, for having failed to adopt an autonomous policy while submitting "to foreign intervention and pressure from the rulers of Washington." They held the "imperialist powers" responsible for the tension in the Middle East, attacked U.S. policy, which was aimed at regional hegemony and the establishment of bases directed against the Soviet Union, and alleged that it was the Government's attraction to imperialism that had led to the Qibya incident.

On the other hand, the Herut representative asserted that "observing armistice agreements" was not the way to maintain peace. He called for "an end to retreat and the payment of advances in the form of concessions and

entreaties for peace," which only made peace more remote and undermined Israel's standing. He declared that only "when Israel attained its historical and strategic borders" would it attain peace. He said that the only guarantee of Israel's security was "the integrity of the homeland" and "the liberation of its occupied regions."

Members of the coalition parties defended Government policy and viewed the Qibya operation as "an accident." The representatives of Agudat Israel, the General Zionists, and the Progressives expressed regret at the loss of life, but emphasized the circumstances that had led to the action. They spoke of the double standard in the world vis-à-vis Jewish and Arab blood. One of them even said that he would not flagellate himself over the incident, but for the Jewish blood that had been shed previously.

Sharett replied to the speakers. Afterwards Mapam, the Communists, and Herut eacj submitted a motion:

Mapam's motion:

(1) The Knesset views the decision of the chief of staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization calling for a cessation of work at the Benot-Yaaqov Bridge to be an arbitrary decision, without any legal or practical basis. The Knesset protests the intervention of the government of the United States in Israel's right to plan and carry out development projects. Israel is prepared to negotiate on water issues with neighboring countries without foreign mediators or patrons. The State of Israel will by no means renounce its sovereign right to use its water resources as it sees fit, in accordance with the requirements of the country's development enterprises and for the good of its inhabitants.

(2) The Knesset lays severe responsibility on the government of Jordan, on the British command of the Arab Legion, and on the political cover-up provided by the government of England for violations of the armistice agreement by Jordanian armed forces and by terrorist infiltration from Jordan to Israel.

(3) The Knesset warns the aggressor groups in neighboring countries: Any attempt at aggression will be met decisively by Israel. The active defense policy of the IDF and the border settlements will foil terrorist infiltration.

(4) The Qibya operation has given Israel's enemies a pretext for overlooking the long string of murderous provocations and bloodshed that has been going on for years, in which hundreds of Jews were slain while the UN remained silent. It provided an occasion for Israel's enemies to present the victims as aggressors. It played into the hands of the imperialists, enabling them to speed up implementation of their designs against the State of Israel. Israel will stand firm against exploitation of the Qibya incident for political machinations against the State of Israel and will not allow those who ignited the conflagration to wash their hands of responsibility and absolve themselves of guilt. At the same time, however,

the Knesset declares that the Qibya operation, in its character and results, is incompatible with the moral and utilitarian fundamentals of our active and essential self-defense.

(5) The Knesset calls on the Arab peoples to turn the armistice agreements into peace treaties. Peace negotiations will succeed if they are free of pressure and intervention by foreign actors who are interested in preserving tension among the peoples of the Middle East to further their imperialistic designs.

(6) The Knesset views the issue of the grant-in-aid as a serious blow to the prestige and sovereignty of the State of Israel and does not approve the exchange of notes between the Foreign Minister and the ambassador of the United States concerning continuation of the grant.

(7) The Knesset lays heavy responsibility on the Government of Israel for the increasing isolation of the State of Israel, for leading Israel astray through political identification with the Western Bloc, and for the absence of an effort to build a bridge of understanding with the mighty camp of the forces of peace and national liberation throughout the world.

In view of the above, the Knesset rejects the Government's statement on its foreign policy.

The motion submitted by the Israel Communist Party:

(1) The Knesset rejects the Foreign Minister's statement on the foreign policy of the Government of Israel, on the grounds that it helps the rulers of America and Britain to intensify their intervention and quest for hegemony in the Middle East by fostering hatred between Jews and Arabs, fanning border conflicts and the loss of innocent Jewish and Arab lives, which escalated gravely with the criminal acts in Yahud and Qibya.

(2) The Knesset condemns the cruel massacre in the Arab village of Qibya, which shocked public opinion in Israel and abroad, blackened Israel's name among the nations, and helped the American and British imperialists intensify their intervention and penetration into the countries of the Middle East.

(3) The Knesset resolves to act forthwith towards peace negotiations with the Arab countries, with no preconditions and no mediators, for the independence of the peoples concerned and peace in the Middle East. The Knesset resolves to abrogate the military administration and all other manifestations of oppression towards the Arab population and to cease cooperation with imperialist go-betweens and with the American conciliation committee, as necessary steps towards peace between Israel and the Arab countries.

(4) The Knesset resolves to act immediately in favor of direct negotiations about water resources between Israel and the neighboring countries, in order to prevent intervention and hegemony by imperialist forces.

(5) The Knesset condemns the unrestrained manner in which the Israel delegation to the United Nations allows itself to be dragged after the rulers of the United States, who are working to increase international tension and to enslave nations, torpedoing peace efforts in Korea, re-establishing the Nazi Wehrmacht, and endangering the peace of the entire world.

Herut's motion:

(1) Given that the Knesset has heard the Foreign Minister's statement and that, in the meantime, the Government has resigned of its own accord, the Knesset rejects the Foreign Minister's statement.

(2) The Government must immediately resume work in the Jordan River channel, unnecessarily halted due to foreign pressure.

(3) In view of Gen. Bennike's expression of anti-Israel sentiments in the Danish press—which disqualify him as a neutral observer—the Knesset instructs the Government to declare Gen. Bennike *persona non grata* and to demand his immediate dismissal.

The Knesset rejected all three motions and approved that submitted by Mapai, as follows:

The Knesset has taken note of the Foreign Minister's statement in his political review, in which he evaluated the Security Council resolution and clarified the Government's position on the development works along the Jordan River.

Divrei ha-Knesset, third session of the Second Knesset,
Vol. XV, pp. 268–323

551. A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram). 1 December 1953

Note

1. Eban is referring to Eden's remarks in the House of Commons on 30 November. Opposition members asked what the government was doing to bring about a meeting between Israeli and Jordanian representatives and to promote peace between the two countries. Eden replied that it was preferable to wait a while for the tempers that had flared after the Qibya incident to calm down. Then it would be possible to bring about a meeting between the two sides.

552. Sh. Eliashiv (Moscow) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 1 December 1953

Coded Tel.: 12; Inc.: 130.09/2325/6

Eliashiv reports on his courtesy meeting with Molotov after the resumption of relations between Israel and the Soviet Union. Molotov was cordial. In reply to Eliashiv's expression of satisfaction at the renewal of diplomatic ties, he stressed that the Soviets, too, are pleased and hope that the resumption of relations will be successful.

Note

1. See No. 579.

553. Editorial Note

Signing of the Local Commanders' Agreement, 1 December 1953

On 1 December 1953, at a regular session of the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission, an amended version of the local commanders' agreement of 8 June 1953 was signed (see No. 256; cf. the version of 1 December in File 130.02/2448/2).

554. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to Israel Missions Abroad. 2 December 1953

Coded Tel.; 130.09/2377/1

Eytan informs Israel's representatives in London, Paris, Stockholm, Athens, and New York that the final round in the campaign for the waters of the Jordan River is at hand. They should prepare to explain Israel's position in the various capitals. Israel will not be content with a resolution that refers the issue back to Bennike and leaves the final decision up to him. Israel seeks a resolution that would explicitly permit it to continue work, with only two qualifications: nonviolation of individual rights and a guarantee of water rights that satisfies the United Nations. Israel holds that the Syrians have no *locus standi* in the matter, since the armistice accord does not grant them any rights and the Jordan flows entirely in Israeli territory, without touching Syria at any point. It should be pointed out that in the

event of a resolution that fails to satisfy Israel, Israel would be forced into a grave confrontation with the Security Council, since water is vital for the country and it cannot make concessions on this issue.

555. J. Tsur (Paris) to W. Eytan. 2 December 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2345/2

Tsur reports on a meeting with the Italian ambassador in Paris after the latter's return from Rome. Quaroni said that Italy is not trying to appease the Arabs at Israel's expense. Italy's Middle East policy differs from that of the Great Powers in that it is endeavoring not to add fuel to the fire that is already blazing in the region. The Italian government proposes improving relations with Israel through enhanced commercial ties, especially at this juncture. It also proposes strengthening ties with Israel by using the Jewish and Italian minorities in America to influence public opinion there. He admitted that the issue of Jerusalem is a stumbling block to improved relations and believes that Israel should initiate talks with the Vatican. Several leading Italian Jews could be of help in this matter.

556. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to Sh. Eliashiv (Moscow). 3 December 1953

Coded Tel.: 21; Outg.: 130.09/2325/5

Sharett reports on the visit by Abramov[2] to the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem. When Sharett described to him the process of building the country, including the absorption of immigrants and teaching them all Hebrew, the envoy asked whether English was not an obstacle to this process. Sharett replied in the negative, explaining that English is an international language and the language of most of the Jewish people with whom Israel has contact. He noted that at one time Russian was the language of the majority of the Jews in Palestine. Sharett expressed satisfaction at the envoy's anticipated statement at the presentation of his credentials[3] to the effect that his government is interested in developing cultural ties with Israel. The envoy said that they wished to publish a Russian-language bulletin on economic and cultural achievements. Sharett emphasized that the circulation of bulletins must be reciprocal.

Notes

1. The reference is apparently to No. 552.

2. The new Soviet minister to Israel. He met with Sharett on 2 December for a get-acquainted session before presenting his credentials to the President.
3. The speech he was to deliver at the presentation of his credentials to the President of Israel on 4 December in Jerusalem.

557. G. Rafael (New York) to M. Sharett. 3 December 1953

Coded Tel.: 222; Inc.: 130.09/2331/3

Rafael reports on a consultation among members of the Israeli delegation to the United Nations concerning the idea of invoking Article XII of the armistice agreement with Jordan.[1] Rafael passes on the delegation's proposals concerning the planned conference. The Israeli representative should begin with a survey of the evolution of the armistice regime over the past five years, express regret at the deteriorating situation and the resultant loss of life on both sides, point out the danger inherent in the continuation of this state of affairs, declare that Israel desires peace and cooperation with its neighbors, and emphasize the urgent need to redress the deteriorating situation. He should then propose the following agenda: (1) Effective means to prevent border violations and incidents and to bolster security in the border region by: (a) marking of the border; (b) elimination of no-man's land; (c) cooperation in the investigation of border incidents; (d) rectification of the armistice line, with the idea of uniting villages and their lands; (e) arrangements for legal border crossings; (2) Implementation of Article VIII of the armistice agreement: (a) operation of the institutions on Mount Scopus; (b) free access to the Holy Places.

Should there be progress on these topics, it would later be possible to propose discussing an end to hostile propaganda and regional cooperation regarding water resources. It would be preferable, however, to enumerate these topics at the start of the discussion.

The suggested procedures are: (1) The discussions should be conducted as unofficially as possible, along the lines of the Rhodes talks. Only if they reach agreement or stalemate should an official meeting with minutes be held. (2) The representatives should be civilians, of ambassadorial rank, accompanied by military advisors. (3) The talks should be held at UN headquarters or in Europe.

Rafael adds that to safeguard Israel's interests at the conference, its representatives must come equipped with detailed proposals for each item on the agenda, at every stage of the negotiations. He proposes that Israel immediately begin preparing studies, summaries, and proposals.[2]

Notes

1. On the initiative to convene an Israel-Jordan conference under Article XII of the

armistice agreement, see No. 531. On the consultation, see the report on the meeting of the Israel delegation to the UN, 2 December 1953, 130.02/2948/5.

2. For the Foreign Ministry's reply, see No. 563, n. 1.

558. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Western Europe Division. 3 December 1953

Copy: 93.02/164/2

Replying to a letter from the division,[1] Tsur points out that when the director-general of the Defence Ministry asks him to exert pressure regarding arms supplies he does not ask questions or challenge the request. It is obvious to him that Israel's security needs outweigh considerations of diplomatic strategy. He requests instructions as to whether the Ministry believes otherwise.

He adds his opinion that it is unwise to pressure France to prevent military supplies to Arab countries. Such an approach is appropriate for countries where Israel has no interest in procuring arms. Since Israel does hope to acquire weapons from France, however, it would be counterproductive to argue against its selling weapons to the Arabs, as this would be at variance with Israel's own request for arms.

Note

1. The reference is to a letter from Moshe Erell, in which he expressed astonishment that Defence Ministry personnel had asked Tsur to raise the issue of acquiring armored vehicles from France in his very first meeting with Parodi. Erell commented that the importunate request of the Defence Ministry personnel "is entirely in keeping with their tradition, as we know it from our day-to-day experience" (93.02/164/2; on Tsur's meeting with Parodi, see his letter to the Western Europe Division, 6 November 1953, ibid.).

559. G. Avner (London) to W. Eytan. 4 December 1953

Coded Tel.: L178; Inc.: 130.09/2319/5

Avner reports on his meeting with Falla, director of the Levant Department at the Foreign Office. Falla told him that Britain is exerting strong pressure in Amman to influence Jordan to participate in the conference.[1] There are difficulties, because the Arab League is trying to persuade Jordan not to participate; Amman has not yet made up its mind. The Arabs are

not willing to agree because, they contend, this is a ploy to draw them into peace talks. Falla requested that in speeches and declarations prior to the conference Israel refrain from proclaiming an intention to convert it into a turning point on the road to peace or into a genuine peace conference, since this would make it harder for the British to influence Jordan. Should statements be necessary, Whitehall requests that Israel declare that its intention in convening the conference was to discuss armistice-related matters and ways to improve border security. The Foreign Office hopes that if the conference does convene, Israel will limit its objectives; otherwise, there are no prospects for a successful outcome.

During the conversation, Avner presented Israel's position on other issues, based on Eban's speeches[4] and Sharett's cable.[5] Falla said that his government's position is extremely close to that of Israel. The British, too, contend that the Benot-Yaaqov canal and any similar projects in the demilitarized zone can be executed, on condition that Israel satisfy the UN representative concerning various items, namely: (1) that no military advantage would accrue to Israel in the region as a result of the project; and (2) that it not have a negative impact on the water supplies of Arab villages south of the project. On the other hand, the British are upset that Israel failed to allay Bennike's concern, which is why the matter reached the Security Council. In any case, Britain asserts that Israel must satisfy the UN representative, not Syria. Britain agrees that Bennike's role is to help prevent obstacles; but Israel must help him in this task.

Notes

1. See No. 531.
2. Sharett instructed Elath to repair immediately to the Foreign Office and submit a protest against Eden's remarks in the House of Commons (see No. 551, n. 1), which were designed to give prior legitimacy to a Jordanian refusal to participate in the conference proposed by Israel under Article XII of the armistice agreement (4 December 1953, 93.04/41/13).
3. See No. 560.
4. See No. 482 (Editorial Note) and No. 520, n. 1.
5. In a telegram to Israel's representatives in the capitals of several Security Council members, including the ambassador in London, Sharett repeated the main lines of the Israeli position as it appears in No. 554. In the wake of a misunderstanding of Eytan's instructions (see Eban to Eytan, telegram 217, 2 December 1953, 130.09/2331/3), Sharett explained once again that Israel was asking the Security Council to allow resumption of work in the demilitarized zone after Israel had persuaded Bennike, and not Syria, that it would safeguard individual rights in the area (3 December 1953, 130.09/2319/4).

560. E. Elath to M. Sharett (telegram). 4 December 1953

Notes

1. See No. 559, n. 2.
2. Cf. No. 551, n. 1.
3. See No. 559.
4. Cf. Allen's report on the meeting, 4 December 1953, PRO, FO371/104763.

561. J. Tsur (Paris) to W. Eytan. 4 December 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2345/2

Tsur reports on a talk at the Quai d'Orsay.

(1) The French Foreign Ministry generally accepts Israel's position on the Benot-Yaaqov project. At the same time, its officials have faith in Bennike and more confidence than Israel does in his probity and ability to deal with the issue. They do agree that it would be better to give him clear instructions.

(2) The French have prepared abundant material in anticipation of a possible discussion of Middle East problems at the Bermuda Conference,[2] even though there is no certainty that the topic will be discussed in depth. The French position is as follows: (a) They would like to see meticulous observance of the 1898 Convention on passage through the Suez Canal. Their declared position is that free passage must be guaranteed at any price. (b) They are concerned about Arab acquisition of arms and the American intention to conclude bilateral treaties with several Middle East countries, such as Syria and perhaps even Egypt, after it reaches an agreement with Britain. During his visit to Turkey, Bidault stated frankly that any weapons provided to the Arabs are more likely to be used offensively against Israel than defensively against Russia. At the Bermuda conference Bidault will probably ask the Americans about this bluntly. All these plans were devised without consultation with France. (c) The French reject the American water scheme, which they deem impracticable as long as there is tension between the countries involved. They believe that for the present it is preferable to proceed with individual plans, which could subsequently be incorporated into an overall water network. Apparently this issue, too, will be taken up at Bermuda.

Notes

1. The reference is to Parodi's reply to Tsur's memorandum of 10 November, in the

wake of their conversation the previous day (see No. 499). The reply, which dealt with the Jordan River project, read in part: "Your assumptions will be considered within the framework of an impartial study of the issue presently being conducted by the French government. In the course of its search for a just solution, while safeguarding the honor of the international authority, the government of France does not intend to sacrifice a single one of Israel's just interests and is intent on preserving the bonds of friendship that link the two countries." (See telegram from Tsur to the secretary-general of the UN, 29 November 1953, 130.09/2345/2.)

2. On 3 December, the leaders of the three Western powers met in Bermuda to discuss their relations with the Soviet Union, the problem of Germany and Austria, and defense of the Free World.

562. D. Shaltiel (Rio de Janeiro) to J. Herzog. 4 December 1953

Orig.: 130.02/2443/10

Replying to Herzog's letter,[1] Shaltiel reports on his meeting with da Cunha. Shaltiel expressed Israel's satisfaction at Brazil's interest in the problem of Jerusalem and willingness to help resolve it. Fabrino's proposal, as presented to Shaltiel, had been discussed by the government of Israel. In the course of the discussion, a number of difficult and complicated questions were raised that require answers. Shaltiel then presented the questions contained in Eytan's telegram of 26 October.[2] He said that Israel cannot accept Fabrino's proposal, but does not reject it out of hand. As the talk progressed, Shaltiel raised the idea of an Israel-Jordanian convention that would guarantee the immunity of the Holy Places in the Jerusalem area in the case of disturbances or war. Such a convention could allay the concern of Christian countries about the Holy Places and enable a discussion of the Jerusalem issue in a quiet and relaxed atmosphere.

Da Cunha replied that Shaltiel's reaction to Fabrino's proposal encouraged him to continue his explorations. The next stage must be to check Jordan's reaction to the idea of limited demilitarization and internationalization of the Old City. He will instruct the Brazilian ambassador in Egypt to sound out the Jordanians. He promised not to inform the Jordanians what the Israeli representative had told him.

He sketched in broad outline the proposal to be presented to the Jordanians: (1) The Jerusalem area, including the Old and New cities, would be declared a demilitarized zone and Israeli and Jordanian forces withdrawn from it. (2) The Old City *intra muros* would be internationalized, in accordance with the UN resolution. The same regime would apply to Christian Holy Places outside the walls. (3) The Jordanians will be told that such a plan entails a major concession by Israel: first, the very acceptance of limited demilitarization, which would benefit both parties; second, inter-

nationalization of the Old City would mean waiving the Jewish claim to the Old City, which is their historical capital and the cradle of their religion and national culture.

If Jordan rejects this proposal the Brazilians will not pursue it further. If the response is not wholly negative, there would be an opening for further negotiations.

With regard to the Vatican, da Cunha said that he would like to persuade the Vatican Secretary of State to adopt a different definition of the term "the city of Jerusalem," one that would include only the Old City within the walls. It is neither logical nor morally justified to demand internationalization of that part of Jerusalem that contains no Christian Holy Places. Da Cunha assumes that the Vatican will realize that there is no chance of implementing the resolution on internationalization and will agree to restrict it to the Old City and to those few Holy Places located in the Israeli sector of Jerusalem. Da Cunha added that the Vatican must be made aware that this proposal entails a serious concession on Israel's part; in exchange for this concession, Jerusalem would be recognized as Israel's capital. Obviously, should an agreement be reached it must not lead to the "Vaticanization" of the Old City, but rather to internationalization of Jerusalem under the supervision of the United Nations. Should the Vatican not accept this reasoning and stubbornly insist on implementation of the 1947 internationalization resolution, there would be no point to further negotiations.

At the end of the meeting, da Cunha said that Washington and London had been informed of the main lines of the Brazilian proposal. Both governments welcomed the initiative, but expressed considerable skepticism as to its feasibility.

Shaltiel writes that his impression is that he has achieved his objective of not rejecting the plan outright and permitting Brazil to continue its feelers. He believes that, in any case, Israel's attitude will improve its standing in Brazil.

Notes

1. See No. 466, n. 3.
2. In File 130.09/2360/1.

563. A. Eban to W. Eytan (telegram). 4 December 1953

Notes

1. In response to telegrams from Eban and Rafael about planning the conference with

the Jordanians (see No. 557 and n. 2 there; also Eban to Eytan, telegram 218, 2 December 1953, 130.09/2331/3), Eytan stated that no progress could be made on the conference until a consensus was reached with the military echelons, which had voiced strong opposition to Eban's initiative (see No. 541). Senior IDF officers considered the plan to be dangerous, unwise, and doomed to failure. Eytan added that they had decided to defer consultation with the military until Rafael's return. In any case they had to wait for Jordan's answer and it was preferable not to display signs of impatience at this juncture (4 December 1953, 130.09/2330/21; see also Sharett's memorandum attached to Eban's aforementioned telegram).

2. See No. 523 and n. 4 there.
3. For Sharett's reply, see No. 568.

564. A. Eban to H. C. Lodge. 4 December 1953

Notes

1. Eban met with Lodge on 5 December. See No. 565.
2. See Nos. 536 and 549.
3. The attached document quotes remarks made by Gross on 18 May 1951: "In associating the delegation of the United States with the statement made by Sir Gladwyn Jebb just now, I hope that the apprehension expressed by the representative of Israel will have been met. I should like to underline, on behalf of my delegation, the comment made on behalf of all the sponsors by Sir Gladwyn Jebb, that the sponsors of the draft resolution are all agreed that the Lake Huleh drainage project would undoubtedly promote the general welfare of the area, and on general grounds they would like to see it put into effect as soon as possible."
4. See Vol. 4, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, pp. 133–34.

565. G. Rafael to W. Eytan (telegram). 5 December 1953

Notes

1. The paragraph, which included a summary of Eban's letter (see No. 564), has been omitted here.
2. Rafael is referring to paragraph and sub-paragraph numbers in the part of the telegram omitted here: in paragraphs 1(a) 1(b) he summarized points (a), (b) and (c) of the letter; in paragraphs (2) and (3), points (b) and (e), and in paragraph (4), point (f) of the letter.
3. In paragraph (7), Rafael summarized the last two paragraphs of Eban's letter.
4. Two days after the meeting, Rafael cabled Eytan that Ross had informed them that, after the meeting with Lodge, the Americans had reworked the draft resolution and decided to clarify the issue of military advantage in the spirit of the remarks made during the meeting (telegram 239, 7 December 1953, 130.09/2331/3).

566. A. Nissan (Stockholm) to W. Eytan. 5 December 1953

Coded Tel.: 5; Inc.: 130.09/2954/4

Nissan reports on his meeting with the Danish foreign minister,[1] at which he emphatically insisted on Israel's right to resume work in the demilitarized zone. Nissan warned the foreign minister of the probable consequences of an unfavorable decision by the Security Council and requested that Denmark's representative on the Security Council be instructed to insist upon a positive and clear instruction to Bennike, in the spirit of the telegrams from the Foreign Ministry.[2] The foreign minister responded favorably to Israel's request and agreed to inform the Danish UN mission of the points raised by Nissan. He stressed the importance of direct contacts between the Israeli and Swedish delegates at the United Nations. Nissan proposes that Eban meet immediately with the Danish UN envoy and inform him of the Israeli position.

Notes

1. Nissan, who was accredited as minister to the Scandinavian countries, left Stockholm for Copenhagen on 4 December to meet with the Danish foreign minister. (See his telegram to Eytan, 3 December 1953, 130.09/2362/1. For the full report, see Nissan to Najar, 16 December 1953, 130.02/3688/9.)
2. See No. 554 and No. 559, n. 5.
3. Evidently Gaulan's meeting with the Danish foreign minister on 23 November. (See Gaulan's telegram to the Foreign Ministry, 23 November 1953, 130.09/2362/1.)
4. Eban met Borberg and came away with the impression that he viewed the Israeli position favorably and had received instructions from Copenhagen. Kidron, reporting on the meeting, wrote that Borberg's influence over Bennike was an unknown quantity. The Danish government should find a way of conveying to Bennike its support for continuation of the Jordan River project and inform him that his failure would be a blow to Denmark's prestige (Kidron to the Foreign Ministry, telegram 247, 9 December 1953, 130.09/2331/3).

567. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban. 7 December 1953

Coded Tel.: 712; Outg.: 130.09/2330/21

Sharett again warns Eban of the serious repercussions in Israel of a resolution halting work on the canal in the demilitarized zone. It makes no difference whether the conditions in which work may continue are included in the resolution or left to Bennike's discretion. Sharett emphasizes that, apart from the serious blow to the project itself, such a resolution would

also represent a diplomatic failure that would lead to a debate at home over whether to defy the UN or bow to its decision. He hopes that the UN delegation is mobilizing all its channels of influence to put pressure on the State Department and the White House. Sharett is concerned that an unfavorable resolution could have a serious affect on the country's mood, worse even than the Qibya resolution, since that applied to an isolated incident in the past, whereas the present resolution threatens to seal the fate of a long-term development enterprise.[4]

Notes

1. See No. 561, n. 2.
2. See No. 488 (Editorial Note).
3. See No. 534 (Editorial Note).
4. See Eban's reply in No. 569.

568. M. Sharett to A. Eban (telegram). 7 December 1953

Notes

1. See No. 563, n. 1.
2. See No. 563.
3. See No. 523, n. 4. Cf. M. Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. 1, pp. 178, 179–80, 181, 188.
4. See No. 557.
5. Eban was soothed by Sharett's remarks, but pointed out the discrepancy between what Sharett had written and the inference to be drawn from Eytan's telegram, namely, that activity should be suspended because of the army's opposition (Eban to Sharett, telegram X243, 8 December 1953, 130.09/2331/3). The same day, Rafael cabled Sharett that he was concerned with the continual sniping evident in telegrams 229 and 713 and their predecessors. He would provide an oral explanation of the practical and theoretical background that motivated Eban's reactions. Meanwhile, he proposed a "cease fire," whose observance by the New York delegation he would ensure. Sharett should bear in mind how far New York was from Israel. The responsibility borne by and pressure on the Israeli representatives there were tremendous, and the disgrace of the Qibya operation had left a psychological scar. Rafael expressed his confidence that Sharett and Eban could clarify, at some early opportunity, the crucial and fundamental issues that had arisen (telegram 246, 8 December 1953, ibid.).

569. A. Eban (New York) to M. Sharett. 8 December 1953

Coded Tel.: 241; Inc.: 130.09/2331/3

Replying to an earlier telegram,[1] Eban writes that he shares Sharett's con-

cern and assures him that he is fulfilling all instructions from Jerusalem and working without letup to influence the Security Council resolution about the demilitarized zone. So far they have managed to modify the American stand.[3] Britain and France, too, reject any need for Syrian consent and have stated as much to the Syrian UN delegate. Eban promises to ask them to say so openly.

Eban adds that under no circumstances should American Jewry be enlisted in this matter. Such pressure might work against Israel, since continual and exaggerated use of this weapon could give Dulles a complex. Nevertheless, Eban does intend to put pressure on Lodge, who is handling the issue. It would be helpful were Davis to cable Washington about the political and public importance of the matter. Meanwhile, the delegation is waiting for the revised version of the draft resolution, drawn up after Eban's meeting with Lodge. He requests that efforts be made to guarantee a favorable attitude on the part of London and Paris, or at least that they not foil the positive U.S. intention.

Notes

1. See No. 567.
2. See No. 564.
3. See No. 565 and n. 4 there.
4. See No. 573.
5. Ibid. (appendix).

570. A. Levavi (Jerusalem) to E. Sasson. 8 December 1953

Copy: 130.02/2411/13

In the wake of Sasson's reports[1] of an imminent change in Italy's Middle East policy, several Foreign Ministry officials, including specialists on Italian affairs, held a consultation on the subject on 1 December. Opinions were exchanged, with special emphasis on the proposal that Israel use its influence in the United States to further Italy's interests in Trieste. The following conclusions were reached:

(1) Israel does not have to take any initiative because of the possibility of a fundamental change in Italy's Middle East policy; it can wait for developments on Italy's side. On the other hand, practical problems still pending between Israel and Italy should continue to be dealt with, so as to resolve them in a satisfactory manner as soon as possible.

(2) The nature of Israeli relations with the United States and the tasks currently imposed on U.S. Jewry rule out any genuine assistance to the

Italians on the Trieste issue.

(3) Should any proposals or requests be forthcoming from Italy, they will have to be discussed in their own right from a *quid pro quo* perspective.

(4) Israel's minister in Rome need not make a special effort to advance the date of his meeting with the Italian prime minister.

Notes

1. See Nos. 494, 511, and 555, and Sasson to Levavi, 2 December 1953, 130.10/2534/13.
2. Sasson informed them that there were indications in Rome that the Italian prime minister had decided to reconsider Italy's Middle East policy in light of the assessment that American Jews, by virtue of their influence on the U.S. Administration, could be of help Italy in the Trieste issue. Sasson asked whether there was any point in advancing the date of his meeting with the Italian prime minister and foreign minister and whether he should raise this issue on that occasion (27 November 1953, 130.09/2356/4).

571. G. Rafael (New York) to W. Eytan. 9 December 1953

Coded Tel.: 250; Inc.: 130.09/2331/3

Rafael inquires as to the cause of such a large number of incidents along the Syrian border in the last week. He expresses hope that Israel will maintain its *sang-froid* at a time when the Security Council is about to discuss the Jordan River canal issue.[1]

Note

1. Eytan replied that there were two reasons for the increase in the number of incidents: (1) incursions into the Sea of Galilee, which is in Israeli territory, by the Arab residents of Buteiha in their boats, now that the new fishing season had begun; (2) Israeli plowing of uncultivated state land in the southern demilitarized zone to prevent Syrian expansion in this area. Eytan explained that Israel's actions were in no way designed to be provocative (Eytan to the Israel delegation in New York, telegram 727, 10 December 1953, 130.09/2330/21).

572. E. Elath (London) to M. Sharett. 9 December 1953

Outg.: 93.04/41/12

In response to Eytan's telegram,[1] Elath reports on his talk with Nutting, in

which he described the dispute with Syria over work in the demilitarized zone. After Elath's explanations, Nutting understood the grave implications of any resolution that would condition continuation of work in the demilitarized zone on Syrian agreement, since this would grant the Syrians a status to which they are not entitled by any section or interpretation of the armistice agreement. Elath asked that the Foreign Office explicitly instruct the British delegation to the UN to oppose making resumption of work contingent on a decision by Bennike or his negotiations with the Syrians. Elath promised that Israel would meet its obligations to the Arab landowners. Nutting replied that his government wishes to encourage Israel's economic development, not hinder it. The British agree with Israel on the need to continue the project and will not allow the Syrians to gain the upper hand and torpedo it. At the same time, his government is bound to consider Bennike and his prestige; he hopes to find a way to steer a middle course between these two points.

Nutting expressed understanding of Israel's demands and claims. As the conversation progressed, however, he raised his government's serious claims against Israel. The Foreign Office discerned in Sharett's address to the Knesset[3] and in Eban's speeches at the Security Council a mistaken and unjustified interpretation of Britain's policy in the Qibya affair. Eban's remarks leave the impression that Britain has no interest in or concern about peace in the region and is making no effort to improve Israel's relations with Jordan. Nutting emphasized that Britain is concerned about these matters. Its attitude is pragmatic, however; it has no desire to make declarations and pronouncements that have no basis in reality. British policy-makers understand that, given the current situation in Jordan and other Arab countries, there is no chance of their making peace with Israel; this is why they have not supported Israel's requests. On the other hand, they are trying to influence the Jordanian government to attend the conference to be convened at Israel's initiative, on the basis of Article XII, not only because the invitation has a legal basis, but also in the hope that it could lead to an improvement in conditions along the border. Nutting stressed that although Britain has friendly relations and treaties with several Arab countries, since it recognized Israel it has seen to it that its friendship with the Arabs does not impinge on its relationship with Israel.

Elath replied that he was sure that Sharett and Eban had not intended to question the friendly relations between the two countries. Precisely because this friendship is dear to Israel, however, they had allowed themselves to vent Israel's disappointment with Britain's reaction to the Qibya affair. Elath explained how the Israeli public felt about Britain's reaction to Qibya. He expressed the hope that any doubts as to Britain's intentions would be dispelled over time as Britain provides evidence of its objectivity in all controversies between Israel and the Arab states. He repeated that the government of Israel seeks understanding and friendly relations with Brit-

ain. It is precisely Israel that appreciates Britain's special traits, which are foreign to nations that neither value nor understand democracy. He promised that Israel will do all in its power to improve the friendly relations between the two countries.

Nutting proposed that Elath meet with the foreign secretary after the latter returns from Bermuda. The meeting lasted about an hour.[5]

Notes

1. Sharett had informed Elath of a report from New York to the effect that the United States was willing to wind up the Jordan canal dispute with a resolution that would allow a resumption of work, but Britain was pressing for a more stringent approach. Although Britain would not condition resumption of the work on Syrian consent, its demand that Bennike be allowed to decide whether or not to accept the Syrian claim that the enterprise would give Israel a military advantage would effectively put paid to the whole venture. Sharett had pointed out to Elath the seriousness of the situation in the spirit of his telegram to Eban in No. 567 above (7 December 1953, 130.09/2319/4).
2. See No. 559, last paragraph.
3. On 30 November 1953. See No. 550 (Editorial Note).
4. See No. 507 (Editorial Note).
5. See No. 561, n. 2.
6. Compare Nutting's two reports on the meeting, 9 December 1953, PRO, FO371/104763.

573. A. Eban to H. C. Lodge. 11 December 1953

Notes

1. The draft resolution submitted by the three Western powers and the modifications proposed by Eban can be found in the appendix below.
2. See No. 565.
3. See Vol. 4, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, pp. 133–34.
4. See No. 436, n. 2, and No. 452, n. 2.
5. See No. 381, appendix.
6. See No. 475 (Editorial Note).
7. See Vol. 3, Appendix J.

574. Memorandum by A. Eban. 12 December 1953

130.02/2432/3

(A) Eban is reacting to a memorandum by the Chief of the General Staff to

the Minister of Defence concerning inviting Jordan to a conference under Article XII of the armistice agreement.

(B) He believes that the memorandum reflects a misunderstanding of Article XII and of the principles and procedures included therein. In particular, Eban challenges the following assumptions:

(1) According to the Chief of Staff, the purpose of Article XII is to amend the armistice agreement, not to ensure its full implementation. Eban asserts that this assumption is groundless. Each of the two countries that are party to the agreement is entitled to convene a conference to revise a provision or provisions of the agreement. Each country is also entitled to request a review of the agreement, that is, to examine its implementation and any shortcomings that come to light during implementation, in order to jointly seek ways to shore up the arrangements and procedures of the armistice regime. Israel is seeking such a review, not revision of the agreement.

(2) The Chief of Staff contended that Article VIII of the armistice agreement might be rephrased to Israel's detriment. Eban rejects this argument: there is no theoretical or real possibility of rewording any article of the agreement without Israel's consent. He also doubts whether Jordan would propose rewording this article. Since it is Israel, rather than Jordan, that is demanding implementation of the article, it is difficult to see how the discussion of an existing article would be to Israel's detriment, especially if one assumes that Israel will be represented at the conference by persons endowed with political sagacity and tactical ability. Should Jordan unexpectedly propose a worse text, it could always be rejected and countered by another Israeli version. If this were not accepted, the current wording of the article would be retained.

(3) Eban cannot accept the Chief of Staff's assumption that any discussion of borders must be to Israel's disadvantage: (i) In the past, diplomatic means have actually expanded Israel's borders beyond the territory occupied by military campaigns. (ii) There have been comprehensive and partial agreements for mutual boundary rectifications that Israel considered to its advantage, but which were not approved by the other party for reasons of domestic politics. Eban presents these two facts to refute the Chief of Staff's argument that any discussion of border rectifications would automatically and necessarily lead to disaster. Eban believes that everything depends on the dynamism and fervor that Israel's representatives bring to the conference table.

(C) The agitation and vacillation evinced by the Arabs and their allies concerning the possible outcome of the conference prove that it posed no danger for Israel.

(D) Debates at such a conference must be weighed against the threat to Israel's political standing and security should the status quo of the armistice agreement continue indefinitely.

(E) Finally, Eban summarizes the advantages that would accrue to Israel from negotiations with Arab states, on the basis of Article XII of the armistice agreements with Jordan and Egypt or Article VIII of the agreements with Syria and Lebanon:

(1) Bilaterality: The agreement stipulates that such negotiations must be conducted between two parties. Thus Israel can overcome the hurdle of an encounter with a united Arab front and return to the procedural principle of the Rhodes negotiations.

(2) Mandatory attendance: The article states that participation in the conference is obligatory. This deprives the Arabs of the right to demand that some of their claims be satisfied before they come to the negotiation table, as compensation for their agreeing to sit down with Israel.

(3) A convenient framework: The article stipulates a clear point of departure for the discussions, namely, the armistice agreement, including its border arrangements and other details.

(F) Finally, Eban again stresses that, from all points of view, this kind of encounter with the Arab world is preferable to any other framework proposed in the past.

Notes

1. No document bearing this date has been found. Apparently there was a mix-up here and the reference is to No. 541, dated 26 November.
2. See No. 539.

575. Sh. Eliashiv to M. Sharett (telegram). 12 December 1953

Note

1. In reply, Bartur and Levavi cabled that they were convinced it was possible to conclude a deal with substantial economic and political importance if the Israelis preserved their *sang-froid* and worked together steadfastly and consistently to overcome the various obstacles (telegram 40, 13 December 1953, 130.09/2325/5). For the problems that arose during the negotiations on the position of Delek (the Israel National Fuel Company), see the memorandum from Bartur to Sharett, 14 December 1953, 130.02/2420/2. See also the exchange of telegrams on those days between the mission in Moscow and the Foreign Ministry, Files 130.09/2325/5 and 130.09/2325/6.

576. J. Tsur (Paris) to W. Eytan. 13 December 1953

Orig.: 130.02/2410/9

Tsur is replying to Sasson's letter[1] on the Arab problem. He notes that al-

though he has never dealt with the Arab problem, Sasson's letter prompted him, too, to ask "what next?" In one of their past conversations Tsur had told Eytan that Israel's foreign policy suffered from a lack of direction and a scarcity of tools for dealing with the Jewish question and the Arab problem. This has been the case with regard to the Arab question since the establishment of the State. Israeli diplomats have always talked about the Arab problem and held contacts with representatives of the neighboring countries, but without preparing themselves for the day when the Arabs would agree to sit down and negotiate with Israel.

Tsur believes that it is impossible to differentiate Israel's domestic policy towards its Arab minority from its political line towards the Arab countries. He mentions his painful impressions from a visit to the Galilee, which he has already passed on to Eytan, and his question as to who determines policy towards the Arab minority—the Foreign Ministry or the Defence Ministry? Tsur explains that he is not speaking of ethical considerations, but of purely practical ones. In his opinion, Israel has not taken a long-term view its of policy vis-à-vis its Arab minority. He mentions the problem of the village of Bir'am and asks whether there is no better way to forge common interests with the Arabs who live in Israel. He emphasizes that he was not disregarding the generations of hatred and the incitement originating from across the border. But he is willing to assume that were the Government to discuss this issue it might adopt a policy different from that it has been following so far.

He supports Sasson's proposal that the Foreign Ministry hold an internal consultation on the issue.[4]

Notes

1. Sasson expressed concern at the political morass into which Israel had sunk after the Qibya incident and at the draft Security Council resolution submitted by the Western powers. Even if a condemnatory resolution were passed, he argued, it would not modify Arab hostility towards Israel; such a resolution was even liable to entrench their position. It transpires from the Security Council debates that the Americans and the British "do not care . . . if the economic siege of Israel continues, . . . if Israel does not develop its water resources, . . . if Israel does not achieve the necessary accords and peace, . . . and if Israel continues to be an isolated state in the Middle East," etc. In a vein somewhat critical of Foreign Ministry actions, Sasson said that repairing the situation required "a fundamental and considered revision of the policy . . . towards both the Arabs and the West." He cautioned that, in the absence of such a step, "in the future we shall have to face an endless series of 'Qibyas' by both ourselves and the Arabs, as well as Western 'rebukes and restrictions'" that would make things more difficult. According to Sasson, it was the Foreign Ministry, not the Defence Ministry or the Government as a whole, that must find an answer to the

question "What next?" (Sasson to Eytan, 19 November 1953, 130.02/2410/9). For Sharett's reply, see No. 586. See also No. 593.

2. Thomas McMahon, an American clergyman and head of the Pontifical Mission for Palestine, met with Herzog in Jerusalem on 6 and 7 November 1953 and in Haifa on the 11th of that month. See the report on the talks in Information to Israel Missions Abroad, No. 761, 17 November 1953, 130.02/2314/10.
3. See No. 356 and n. 1 there, and No. 365.
4. Eytan passed on a copy of the letter to Sasson. For Sasson's reaction, see his letter to Tsur, 20 December 1953, 93.02/164/4. For Rafael's reaction, see No. 615.

577. *Aide-Mémoire* from the Government of the United Kingdom. 14 December 1953

Notes

1. The *aide-mémoire* printed here was delivered in Tel Aviv on 15 December by the first secretary of the British Embassy to the deputy chief of protocol in the Foreign Ministry.
2. See No. 531.

578. A. Eban to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram). 14 December 1953

Notes

1. See No. 573 (appendix).
2. See No. 381 (appendix).
3. See No. 584.
4. At the meeting, Jebb explained to Eban's satisfaction the implication of Article 11 of the Western powers' draft resolution. See Eban to Sharett, telegram X271, 15 December 1953, 130.09/2331/3.
5. That night, Shiloah met with Bedell Smith, who promised to support Lodge's efforts to explain the implications of Article 11 of the draft resolution to the Security Council (Eban to Sharett, telegram X266, 15 December 1953, ibid.).

579. Sh. Eliashiv (Moscow) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 14 December 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.11/2496/7

Eliashiv reports on the submission of his credentials to the president of the Soviet Union, Voroshilov. Eliashiv expressed Israel's delight at the resump-

tion of relations and its great interest in maintaining friendly relations with the Soviet Union. He thanked the Soviet Union for its support when Israel was founded and for its swift recognition of the state. He said that the dual function of the young state is to make the desert bloom and to gather in the exiles, creating a new people in the process. Without peace, said Eliashiv, there is no possibility of creative activity. Israel's memory of the last war strengthens its recognition of the need for peace. Israel welcomes the aspirations of the Soviet Union and other nations to establish a stable peace. The State of Israel is following attentively the Soviet Union's creative activity. There are common elements in what is being done in the Soviet Union and in Israel. He completed his address by wishing the Soviet president long life and happiness.

The president congratulated Eliashiv on taking up his new post and expressed pleasure at the resumption and development of relations. He said that his country supports the peace efforts of both large and small nations and welcomes the activities of various peoples to bring about peace.[1] He promised to support the endeavors to maintain friendly and cordial relations, sent his greetings to the Jewish nation and the State of Israel, and wished Eliashiv success in his post.

Notes

1. The next day, the Israel Legation in Moscow dispatched corrections to the telegram. This phrase was corrected to read, "the activities of various nations to safeguard peace" (instead of "the activities of various nations for development"); the second half of the next sentence was amended to read, "greetings to the Jewish nation of the State of Israel" (15 December 1953, 130.11/2496/7). Eliashiv explained that it would have represented a great step forward in the Soviet attitude towards Israel had the previous text ("greetings to the Jewish nation and the State of Israel and its people") been correct, because the time before the Soviets had referred to "the nations of the State of Israel." Nevertheless, he believed the inclusion of the term "Jewish nation" to be a positive change, politically, since it recognized the Jews as "the nation of the State of Israel," even though official Soviet doctrine does not recognize the existence of a Jewish nation at all. (See Eliashiv's memorandum on the presentation of his credentials, 21 December 1953, 130.11/2496/7.)
2. In a telegram he dispatched to the Foreign Ministry the next day, Eliashiv emphasized the importance of Voroshilov's greetings to the Jewish nation and reported that their talk after the ceremony had been cordial and unconstrained. Voroshilov spoke openly of his sympathy for the Jews and the State of Israel. When the Arabs chanced to be mentioned he made disparaging comments about them. As for Jerusalem, Voroshilov noted that "it is an ancient Jewish city even according to the Old Testament." He expressed regret at the severance of relations and great satisfaction that the "sorry affair had ended." (See telegram No. 29, 15 December 1953, 130.09/2325/6; for the text of the speech and Eliashiv's memorandum about the presentation of credentials [21 December 1953], see File 130.11/2496/7.)

580. E. Elath (Jerusalem) to M. Sharett. 14 December 1953

Coded Tel.: L204; Inc.: 130.09/2319/5

Walter Elliot informed Elath that a first-hand source had passed on, personally and confidentially, that the British delegation to the Bermuda conference had been unequivocally told that American Middle East policy is anti-Israel—in its implementation, if not in its objectives. Evidently the Administration is firmly resolved to adopt a consistently pro-Arab and pro-Muslim line and is prepared to concede Israel's interests in exchange for a rapprochement with the Arabs and Muslims. Eisenhower apparently has no clear opinions of his own and is influenced by the State Department, which has greater clout than at any time in the past.

Elliot proposed that Israel rally its friends in the United States, since the anti-Israel line is liable to damage its interests in Britain, too. Elath and Elliot discussed how to step up action by Israel's friends in the Conservative Party, taking into account the changes to be expected in the Middle East once an Anglo-Egyptian accord is reached.

Notes

1. See No. 561, n. 2.
2. Eban expressed doubt on the reliability and accuracy of the analysis that Elliot presented to Elath. He wrote that Bedell Smith's version of the conclusions reached at Bermuda was in no way compatible with that passed on by Elliot. Eban believed that "American policy will continue to be reactive rather than active, that is, it will not seek disagreements with us and will even try to prevent them. The danger will arise chiefly with regard to American reaction to changes in the status quo on our part, as a result of our own policy requirements." Eban added that, according to information he had received, Dulles instructed State Department officials and members of the U.S. delegation at the UN to "avoid a head-on collision with Israel" (Eban's telegram to the Foreign Ministry, 17 December 1953, 93.04/40/19). See also No. 607.

581. M. Sharett to the Israel Delegation to the United Nations. 14 December 1953

Notes

1. The reference is to Rafael's telegram to Sharett (12 December 1953, 130.09/2338/22) containing the text of the Western powers' draft resolution as it appears in No. 573 (appendix) and Eban's proposed modifications, which appear in the same document.
2. See No. 582.
3. See Nos. 585 and 594.

582. A. Eban to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram). 14 December 1953

Notes

1. The draft resolution of the three Western powers (see No. 573 [appendix]). Here Eban is replying to Sharett's request in No. 581, paragraph 3 and following.
2. See No. 381 (appendix).
3. See No. 458.
4. See Vol. 6, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, p. 140.

583. E. Evron (Washington) to the United States Division. 14 December 1953

Copy: 130.20/2460/3

Evron reports on a meeting of American Jewish leaders, convened by Javits, to consult on the situation. The other participants included the president of B'nai B'rith, representatives of the American Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Committee, and important figures such as Rose Halprin, Louis Lipsky, Kenen, and Bernard Katzen. Javits spoke of his concern with State Department policy and of the difficulty in finding solutions to weaken this position. He announced that he planned to propose to the Speaker of the House that a special committee be dispatched to Israel. After the visit, it could serve as a tool for thwarting Administration policy.

Warburg, who was also present at the meeting, gave a gloomy picture of the mood in the Jewish communities. It is obvious that the Administration has adopted an unfriendly policy towards Israel. The unsuccessful attempts to get an official representative of major stature to address the annual conference of the United Jewish Appeal were one manifestation of this. In the end, they had had no option but to invite Eleanor Roosevelt again. Some Jews had withheld donations to the Appeal because of Qibya.

A proposal to dispatch a Jewish delegation to Lodge was rejected. The participants could not decide what solutions such a delegation could offer Lodge.

Kenen cautioned that Israel will probably be asked to make further concessions. All such gestures demanded of Israel in recent years, and to which it agreed, have not mitigated Arab fanaticism and aggression in the slightest. It is unthinkable that Israel be asked to place its cards on the table before the other party has shown any signs of accepting the very idea of negotiations.

Javits summarized the tasks before them: (1) They must lobby Republican leadership circles and the Administration to reaffirm Republican sup-

port of Israel's independence and development, a subject they do not bruit about. (2) He will meet with Lodge to clarify the situation. (3) Efforts must be made to obtain an authoritative declaration by the Administration on the necessity of immediate peace between Israel and its neighbors.

The participants decided to meet again in the near future to review political developments. Evron adds that he believes Javits' attitude towards the American administration has changed. Whereas he initially defended Dulles and believed that the Administration was sympathetic to Israel, he now seems less certain of this.

Note

1. The speech has been omitted here.

584. A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram). 15 December 1953

Notes

1. On 9 December, Eban transmitted to the American, British, French, and Danish representatives to the UN five documents, by means of which he sought to demonstrate that in previous debates and resolutions the Security Council had already determined that work in the demilitarized zone did not afford Israel a military advantage. Hence a decision on continuation of the work must be taken in a non-military context (130.02/2405/3).
2. See No. 578 and nn. 4 and 5 there.
3. See No. 458.
4. See No. 582.
5. The reference is to Article V, Paragraph 5 of the armistice agreement with Syria, which stipulated the military restrictions within the demilitarized zones. See Vol. 3, Appendix J.
6. See Vol. 4, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, pp. 133–34.

585. M. Sharett to A. Eban (telegram). 15 December 1953

Notes

1. See No. 581.
2. For the American water plan, see No. 436, n. 2, and No. 452, n. 2.
3. The reference is to the Ministerial Committee on Foreign Affairs and Security, which discussed this issue on 14 December. (See M. Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. 1, p. 229.)

586. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to E. Sasson (Rome). 15 December 1953

Orig.: 93.20/215/10

Sharett expresses considerable surprise at the content of Sasson's letter to Eytan.[1] He asks what Sasson means by his question, "What next?" and reprimands him for even asking it. "You are not an opposition member of Knesset, who is entitled to ask questions in order to make life difficult for the Government. . . . Nor are you a journalist . . . whose job is to pose questions and allow his readers to find answers to them. . . . You are a diplomatic representative of Israel, who is embroiled, together with the Foreign Ministry, in the torrent of problems of the state's foreign policy." Sharett asks Sasson why he tossed out this question if he has no answer to it.

The Foreign Ministry, writes Sharett, is always open to practical proposals or even abstract ideas, provided they are constructive, from any member of the Ministry staff. But it is illogical for a someone of Sasson's standing to ask questions to which he cannot even suggest an answer. Sharett urges Sasson to follow through and propose what he believes Israel should do.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 576, n. 1.
2. For Sasson's reply to Eytan on this matter, see No. 593.

587. E. Elath (London) to W. Eytan. 16 December 1953

Coded Tel.: L212; Inc.: 130.09/2319/5

Elath reports on his dinner in the company of Bevan, Crossman, and George Wigg. The three are about to visit Egypt, Bevan and Wigg as Naguib's guests. Crossman and Bevan told Elath that the Israeli information campaign directed at members of the Labour Party in recent weeks has diminished the prospects for an Anglo-Egyptian accord. They warned that Israel would bear heavy responsibility for the consequences, which might lead to a coup in Egypt, toppling Naguib and bringing extremists to power. They also alleged that Israel is encouraging the radical bloc among the Conservatives. They asserted that their friendship for Israel is as strong as ever. They support Israel's demand to preserve the military balance between it and Egypt and agree on the need to buttress the Tripartite Decla-

ration of 1950 concerning the defense of Israel against any Egyptian attack in the future. At the same time, they criticized Israel's demands to attach any conditions whatsoever to a settlement between Britain and Egypt; it is unrealistic to expect this.

Elath explained Israel's position, as presented recently by the Foreign Minister.[1] He emphasized that, although Israel supports Egypt's just national demands, it cannot renounce its right to safeguard its own interests and guarantee its security against the dangers posed by a country that does not want to make peace with Israel. Elath added that his interlocutors, who maintain friendly relations with both Israel and Egypt, have the wherewithal to influence Naguib to move towards an agreement with Israel. As long as they have not succeeded in doing so, they should refrain from criticizing Israel. Bevan said that he views his impending visit to Cairo as a mission to narrow the gap between Naguib and Israel; he will do his utmost to this end.[2]

Notes

1. See Nos. 424 and 543.
2. On Bevan's visit to Cairo, see No. 613 and n. 3 there.
3. General elections were held for the first time in the Sudan between 2 November and 5 December. They were won by the pro-Egyptian National Unionist Party.

588. A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram). 16 December 1953

Notes

1. The reference is to the speeches by the representatives of the three Western powers at the Security Council session held that day, during which they also submitted a draft resolution on the Israel-Syrian dispute in the demilitarized zone. See No. 573 (appendix). For the Security Council debates, see *SCOR*, Eighth Year, 648th meeting, 16 December 1953.
2. For Eban's speech to the Security Council meeting the next day, see *SCOR*, Eighth Year, 649th meeting, 17 December 1953.

589. A. Eban (New York) to W. Eytan. 16 December 1953

Coded Tel.: 279; Inc.: 130.09/2331/3

Eban reports that even after many conversations the Soviet attitude remains unclear.[1] He proposes that the Soviets be advised, in both Israel and

in Moscow, of the importance of the water project for Israel and of Israel's expectation that the Soviets will assist this important development enterprise. They should be apprised of the fact that their position will determine the attitude adopted towards the Soviet Union by public and government bodies in Israel.

Notes

1. In Vyshinsky's speech to the Security Council on 16 December. See No. 588 and n. 1 there.
2. On the propaganda campaign conducted in the spirit of Eban's recommendations, see Nos. 595 and 599.

590. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to the Israel Delegation to the United Nations. 17 December 1953

Coded Tel.: 265; Inc.: 130.09/2330/20

Rafael instructs Eban to discuss the following matters with Bennike and Vigier before their departure from New York:

(1) Implementation of the Security Council resolution:[1] He should emphasize that Israel expects them to make every effort to bring about a speedy clarification of all outstanding problems. Israel is willing to cooperate on the assumption that their intention is to allow implementation of the project.

(2) At all costs he must prevent Bennike from carrying out his intention to conduct an inspection on Mount Scopus. He must be told that Israel has grounds for serious complaints against Jordanian violations of the Mount Scopus agreement and that it is not desirable to increase tensions between Israel and Jordan at this juncture, so as not to jeopardize the prospects of convening a conference between the two countries.

(3) It must be made clear to Bennike that the intention of the chairman of the Israel-Egypt Mixed Armistice Commission not to vote with Israel on over 300 complaints it has submitted concerning infiltration, on the grounds that infiltrations by individuals do not constitute a violation of the armistice agreement, runs contrary to precedent, to Bennike's statements to the Security Council, and to the Council's resolution on Qibya.[2] He must be made to appreciate the seriousness of the situation that would be created should UN representatives act in flagrant contravention of the norm. Infiltration is a form of warfare waged by the Arab countries against Israel and is a major cause in the lack of security along the borders. Rafael instructs Eban to repeat these arguments to the UN secretary-general.

Notes

1. See No. 573 (appendix).
2. The proposed conference between Israel and Jordan under Article XII of the armistice agreement. See Nos. 531 and 557; cf. No. 563 and n. 1 there.
3. See No. 534 (Editorial Note).

591. Editorial Note

Complaint against Egypt Submitted by Israel to the Security Council, 18 December 1953

In Port Saïd on 14 December, the Egyptians confiscated a cargo of meat destined for Israel from the ship *Franca Maria*, which was en route to Haifa. In the wake of this action, Eban submitted a protest note to the Security Council. See Eban to the president of the Security Council, 18 December 1953, 93.03/3006/3.

592. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Delegation to the United Nations. 18 December 1953

Coded Tel.: 278; Outg.: 130.09/2330/21

Eytan informs Eban that representatives of the People's Republic of China have dropped hints to Israel concerning the possible establishment of diplomatic relations.[1] Eytan asks that the American reaction to such a step be ascertained. The possibility of a semi-official visit by an Israeli diplomat to Peking was also raised. Eytan requests his correspondent to find out whether the American response would be more moderate in such a case.[2]

Notes

1. See, for example, No. 513.
2. Eban's reply has not been located. In January 1954, however, Sharett instructed Eban to find an early opportunity for informing the State Department that Israel was seriously considering establishing ties with China as part of its campaign to forge ties with Asian countries, in view of the ongoing Arab diplomatic embargo. (See telegram 961, 28 January 1954, 130.09/2310/15.)

593. E. Sasson (Rome) to W. Eytan. 18 December 1953

Orig.: 130.20/2447/21

In response to Eytan's letter,[1] Sasson attempts to answer the question he himself raised in his letter to Eytan of 19 November.[2] He hastens to note that it is not his intention to criticize Foreign Ministry personnel, but only to contribute his experience and knowledge of Arab policy:

(1) He does not entirely rule out retaliatory actions such as Qibya; even the British and the Americans, who ostensibly act only after deliberation, do not flinch from such actions when the need arises. Hiroshima may be cited as an example.

(2) Nevertheless, Sasson believes that the decision to launch reprisal raids should not be based on military and domestic considerations alone, but should also weigh political factors. In particular, any decision on such matters requires coordination among the General Staff, the Defence Ministry, and the Foreign Ministry.

(3) Sasson argues that the international climate must be assessed before a decision is taken to conduct an operation such as Qibya; world public opinion must be properly prepared for such an event. From an international standpoint, the timing of the Qibya operation was bad: it came during a session of the General Assembly, with no advance preparation of the Israeli missions, and while the foreign ministers of the three Western powers were meeting in London.

(4) The fact that the Qibya operation was mounted just when two constructive enterprises—the Jordan works in the north and the establishment of settlements in 'Auja in the south—were being undertaken hampered the struggle to defend those projects and provided the Arabs with fresh arguments. Israel was forced to campaign on several fronts, weakening its hand and strengthening the Arabs. Sasson proposes that, in the future, the priorities be weighed: is it better to defer a retaliatory action or to implement it no matter what, even if more is lost than gained in the international arena and in Israel's ongoing conflict with the Arabs.

(5) If the decision has been taken to conduct an operation in adverse international conditions, Israel must bravely own up to its responsibility and not place the blame on border settlements, attributing the reprisal to residents of the frontier region who could no longer put up with murderous attacks from across the border. Moreover, as a result of Bennike's reports to the Security Council, the Prime Minister has been presented as a liar; his sincerity and the veracity of his statements were called into doubt.

(6) Sasson rejects the recourse to the story that the Qibya operation was conducted by residents of border settlements. It constitutes an admission by Israel that it cannot control the situation and does not add to its honor or credibility. It places Israel on a par with unstable countries and intensi-

fies the apprehensions of enemies and friends alike concerning its political intentions. Arab leaders will be hard put to believe the Foreign Minister's promises when they see that he cannot impose his authority. Sasson anticipates that they will starting believing Begin, the leader of the Herut party, rather than Sharett.

(7) Sasson points out that the prestige of the Western powers in Arab countries has been damaged by the Qibya affair. In his opinion, Israel went astray in this matter because it failed to properly assess its obligation to help preserve U.S. prestige in Arab countries.

(8) Sasson criticizes the Israeli proposal to convene an Israel-Jordanian conference[5] without prior investigation as to whether this is a propitious time in the Arab world for such a step. He holds that the suggestion was advanced at an inopportune moment, creating the impression in Arab political circles and in the three Western powers that Israel's true intention is not to settle border issues, but to force Jordan to come to the negotiating table.

(9) Throughout the five years since independence, Israel has availed itself of every opportunity to express its desire for peace with the Arabs; at every possible forum it has called for peace. But this reiterated call has become a weapon that the Arabs wield against Israel. The refusal to make peace with Israel is now voiced by all the Arab states, whereas until two years ago it was characteristic of only a few Arab politicians.

(10) The Arab refusal to make peace with Israel does not stem from intra-Arab considerations, but from a genuine fear of the country. The Arabs are anxiously following Israel's development and are convinced that Israel will not rest content with its current borders and will try to conquer Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, or at least parts of them. After an incident like Qibya it is difficult to eradicate this false belief by means of speeches or calls for peace. Hence Sasson believes that Israel should decide on a moratorium on calls for peace and on reprisals. A single hand should be guiding Israel's Arab policy and the elaboration of a carefully considered plan that can create an atmosphere of good will in Arab countries.

(11) Sasson also believes that Israel should stop approaching the State Department on matters related to peace with the Arabs. Until a year ago, he believes, American diplomats thought that pressure, promises of aid, and a cordial attitude could prompt Arab leaders to agree to a settlement with Israel. Since Dulles's Middle East tour, however, the attitude has changed. Dulles concluded that the very existence of Israel in the heart of the Arab world constitutes a serious obstacle to the establishment of good relations between the West and the Arabs. Such a state of affairs obliges Israel to tone down its calls for peace in political and economic talks with the Americans.

(12) Sasson believes that the only thing that could advance peace with the Arabs is a satisfactory solution to the Arab refugee problem. If Israel does

not take the initiative, there will be no progress and the situation will never be remedied. Sasson proposes that about 50 refugee families who own land and property in Israel be transferred to one of the Latin American countries. Should the attempt succeed, it could be extended and presented to the United States and UN institutions as a possible solution.

In conclusion, Sasson writes that in this letter he seeks to make plain that his question, "What next?" was not simply tossed out in a vacuum, but was intended to spur thought about the Arab question, among Ministry staff.

Notes

1. In File 93.04/41/13.
2. See No. 576, n. 1.
3. See No. 401, n. 2.
4. See No. 449 (Editorial Note).
5. See Nos. 475 (Editorial Note) and 534 (Editorial Note).
6. See No. 531.

594. M. Sharett to A. Eban (telegram). 20 December 1953

Note

1. See No. 573 (appendix).

595. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to Sh. Eliashiv (Moscow). 20 December 1953

Coded Tel.: 50; Outg.: 130.09/2325/5

Sharett expresses satisfaction with the contents of Eliashiv's telegram[1] and instructs him to say the following in his upcoming talks:

(1) The draft Security Council resolution submitted by the Western countries[2] is far from satisfying Israel; but at least it leaves the door open for renewed work on the Benot-Yaaqov canal. This is why the Arabs are assailing it. Israel would be pleased to have the support of the Soviet Union; Eban would be glad to submit Israel's arguments for implementation of the Jordan River project. It would be strange should the Soviet Union give the impression that it is indifferent to the entire issue by abstaining. Vyshinsky should at least declare that the Soviet Union is in favor of the project.

(2) The issue of *aliya* from the Soviet Union refuses to disappear from the public agenda. As time passes, it is raised more urgently and more frequently by all circles. Everyone believes that the Soviets will ultimately understand the justice of Israel's claim.[3]

Notes

1. Eliashiv notified Sharett that he was going to pay courtesy calls on Zorin and Gromyko on 21 December and requested instructions (19 December 1953, 130.09/2325/6).
2. See No. 573 (appendix).
3. See No. 589.
4. For Eliashiv's meetings with Gromyko, see No. 599 and nn. 2 and 5 there.

596. J. Tsur (Paris) to M. Sharett. 20 December 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2345/2

Tsur reports on Divon's impressions from his trip to Morocco. Divon visited Casablanca, Rabat, Meknes, Fez, Marrakech, and remote villages in the south. He met with Jewish leaders representing various streams and organizations, as well as with the heads of the Joint Distribution Committee and the Alliance Israélite Universelle. He also met with the High Commissioner and government figures, with whom he discussed matters relating to *aliya* and Jewish life.

(1) Moroccan Jewry is, for the most part, involved in a process of freeing itself and breaking out of the native Moroccan mold. Under the leadership of a small group of middle-class intellectuals, it is advancing towards a higher level, accompanied by substantial achievements in the fields of education, health, and integration into European society. (2) The extensive activities of the Alliance, Joint, local communities, and various philanthropic institutions have bettered the conditions of the poor, especially the youth. On the other hand, reports from Israel about the younger generation's alienation from religion, discrimination, and the failure to absorb Moroccan Jews, together with the exaggerated sense of security that prevailed in Morocco after the deposition of the sultan, all work against *aliya*. (3) In this unsettled situation, Israeli and Zionist institutions have hardly any influence on the shape of the Jewish community. The French colonial authorities are working to advance the status of the Jews and dominate the local communities. Because of the plethora of Israeli institutions, the Joint and the Alliance act without any guidance and even without any serious consideration of Israeli institutions; the youth are being left out in the cold. (4) The High Commissioner and his staff told the Israelis that they will not

be disturbed if they are careful and circumspect. Some officials stressed, however, that they would not be pleased if educated Jews, in whom considerable effort was invested, leave Morocco.

The conclusions are that Israeli activity in Morocco must be effectively planned and organized:

(1) A coordinating body for North African affairs must be set up in Israel without delay, with the requisite political caution. It should be under the direction of the Government or Foreign Ministry, in conjunction with the Jewish Agency and the army. (2) A similar coordinating body should be established in Paris, headed by the ambassador, charged with implementing policy and initiating projects and activities. It should include the local leadership of the Alliance and Joint and representatives of the Jewish Agency and other institutions operating in the country. (3) A permanent representative, with very broad powers, must be stationed in Morocco, to represent Israel's interests vis-à-vis the key bodies and, as far as possible, the French colonial authorities. The permanent representative would answer to the Embassy in Paris. Tsur requests that the contents of this telegram be conveyed to the Government and the Jewish Agency and especially to the next session of the Zionist Executive.

Notes

1. The telegram has not been found.
2. Sharett replied that Tsur's telegram was interesting and encouraging, but he preferred to wait for the full report before deciding how to act. He asked whether Tsur or Divon had a suitable candidate to dispatch to Morocco; he proposed naming Emile Najar to coordinate the campaign. Sharett congratulated Divon on his work and asked Tsur to prepare a draft of a thank-you note to Guillaume. (See telegram L179, 22 December 1953, 130.09/2345/3.)
3. See Tsur to Sharett, 27 December 1953, 130.02/2388/13.

597. M. Sharett to A. Eban (telegram). 21 December 1953

Notes

1. See No. 573 (appendix).
2. See No. 594.

598. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 22 December 1953

Coded Tel.: WTE44; Inc.: 130.02/2450/1

The telegram is intended for Elath. Eban writes that the complaint against Egypt[1] will require energetic attention. He doubts whether the Egyptians will release the cargo they have detained in the Suez Canal; perhaps the time has come to wage a general campaign against the regulations instituted by the Egyptians and to get the Powers or the Security Council to approach Egypt. The change in the composition of the Security Council—the return of Brazil and Turkey—should facilitate the struggle. Eban estimates that just the threat of an Israeli diplomatic offensive might spur the Powers to act in Cairo. So as to preserve Israel's freedom of maneuver, he recommends that it not appear as a basic obstacle in the way of Egypt's national aspirations. He is concerned by the impression in the Washington press that the British are relying on Israel as a pretext for not evacuating the Canal. Eban proposes harassing Egypt on issues that directly affect Israel.

Notes

1. The reference is to the complaint against Egypt that Eban submitted to the Security Council on 18 December 1953, following the confiscation of an Israel-bound consignment of meat from the Italian ship *Franca Maria* during its stopover in Port Saïd. (See Eban to the president of the Security Council, 18 December 1953, 93.03/3006/3.)
2. See No. 367, n. 2. In late November, the Egyptians once again tightened the blockade regulations, adding foodstuffs and other commodities to the last of forbidden goods that would be confiscated in Egyptian ports from ships en route to Israel. (See Yaari to the Israel Missions Abroad, 22 December 1953, 130.02/2419/1.)
3. The Security Council resolution of September 1951 concerning free navigation in the Suez Canal. See Vol. 6, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, pp. 257.
3. See No. 587.
4. See No. 605.

599. Sh. Eliashiv (Moscow) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 21 December 1953

Coded Tel.: 39; Inc.: 130.09/2325/6

Eliashiv reports on his talk with Gromyko, pursuant to Sharett's instructions.[1] With regard to the Security Council debate, Gromyko said that it would be a good thing if Israel could reach an agreement with the Arabs without the mediation of a third party. Eliashiv replied that the problem is that the other side is not willing to negotiate with Israel and is interested in

preventing any step that contributes to Israel's progress. When Eliashiv requested that the Soviets support Israel's position, Gromyko answered that they have a UN mission, headed by Vyshinsky, who will know how to act.

Concerning *aliya,* Eliashiv received an absolute no, the likes of which he has never heard before. Gromyko told Eliashiv that he was astonished he had raised an issue relating to Soviet citizens. Gromyko said he understood that Eliashiv's question referred to large-scale *aliya* and not to isolated consular cases. He again stated, in absolute terms, that there is no real basis for discussing the matter. It is Eliashiv's impression that Gromyko expected the question and had decided to respond then and there with absolute firmness. Eliashiv believes that the Soviets have decided to adopt a policy of eliminating the negative attitude towards Soviet Jews while evincing friendliness towards Israel, which would also be interpreted as reconciliation with Soviet Jewry. At the same time, they are resolved to maintain a totally negative position on the question of *aliya.*

Later in the talk, Zorin, who was also present, asked about events in Israel and about the prospects for a settlement with the Arabs. Eliashiv spoke of the Security Council debate and the negative influence of the Council resolution on the Qibya affair. Further details will follow in a letter.[5]

Notes

1. See No. 595.
2. Andrei Vyshinsky, the Soviet UN delegate, spoke at several meetings of the Security Council. On 17 and 18 December he effectively rejected the draft resolution submitted by the Western powers and proposed that the Council defer discussion of Syria's complaint until all the problems had been elucidated and the two sides had arrived at an agreed formula. On 21 December he delivered a lengthy speech in which he attacked the Western draft, especially Article 9, and again proposed adjourning the debate *sine die*. See *SCOR,* Eighth Year, 649th, 650th, and 651st meetings, 17, 18, and 21 December 1953.
3. See No. 534 (Editorial Note).
4. Levavi instructed Eliashiv to tell the Soviets that Israel would respond favorably to a Soviet proposal to raise the level of their respective missions to embassies (7 December 1953, 130.09/2325/5). The diplomatic representations were raised to embassy level in August 1954 (see documents in File 130.11/2496/7).
5. See Eliashiv's memorandum on his meetings with Gromyko and Zorin, 22 December 1953, 130.11/2492/17.

600. M. Kidron to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram). 22 December 1953

Notes

1. Of the armistice agreement with Jordan, under which Eban proposed convening the

Israel-Jordan conference (No. 531). On 21 December, Eban submitted a note to the UN secretary-general, asking him what steps he had taken to implement Israel's request (93.03/3007/5).

2. The Arab League meeting scheduled for 15 December had been postponed to 9 January 1954. At that session, Jordan asked to discuss its reply to the UN secretary-general concerning his overture on convening a conference between Israel and Jordan under Article XII of the armistice agreement. See Rafael to Eban, telegrams 269 and 295, 17 and 21 December 1953, 130.09/2330/21.

601. A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram). 22 December 1953

Notes

1. At the meeting of the Security Council.
2. See No. 573 (appendix).
3. See No. 603 (appendix).
4. For the results of that day's meeting, see No. 620 and n. 1 there.
5. See No. 611.
6. For Sharett and Eytan's reaction to the Security Council debate, before they received Eban's telegram, see No. 606.

602. A. Eban (New York) to W. Eytan. 22 December 1953

Coded Tel.: 118; Inc.: 130.09/2331/1

Because the Danish representative on the Security Council is inclined to offer amendments to the Security Council's draft resolution, Eban proposes that the Israeli minister in Copenhagen make a supreme effort to influence Denmark's position. He suggests that Israel express its displeasure that the Danish representative on the Council has allowed himself to be manipulated by Arab ploys, albeit in good faith and unwittingly. Eban is concerned that a Danish line that deviates from American policy would have an adverse effect on Bennike. If Denmark supports continuation of the Benot-Yaaqov project, its Security Council delegate should state this unequivocally; that is, he should support the original proposal and not fish in troubled waters.

Notes

1. In his remarks at the Security Council meeting of 21 December. It seems, however, that he said something similar in informal discussions about modifications to the Three-Power draft. See No. 601, paragraph 3. See also No. 566.
2. See No. 601 and nn. 2 and 3 there.

603. A. Eban to Sir Gladwyn Jebb. 22 December 1953

Notes

1. An identical letter was sent to Hoppenot, the French permanent representative at the UN (see 130.02/3688/6).
2. See No. 573 (appendix).
3. See appendix below and No. 601.
4. See No. 588.
5. See No. 572.
6. See No. 578, n. 4.
7. See appendix.

604. D. Hacohen (Rangoon) to M. Sharett. 22 December 1953

Orig.: 130.02/2382/12

Hacohen reports on his meeting with the commander-in-chief of the Burmese Army, Lt.-Col. Ne Win, held at the latter's initiative. Ne Win began by recounting his biography, which greatly impressed Hacohen. He went on to say that the reports that had reached him on Hacohen's talks with the head of the arms procurement department of the Burmese War Ministry, who had visited Israel, spurred him to believe that Israel could serve as an example to Burma. Now he wishes to clarify the extent to which Israel can and is prepared to cooperate with Burma.

Hacohen replied that the main purpose for opening a mission in Burma is to strengthen ties with its government, in accordance with its avowed political and economic objectives. Israel could be of help to Burma on both the economic and military fronts. The following stages were agreed upon: (1) The Burmese will conduct internal consultations to determine what they are particularly interested in. (2) A high-ranking Burmese military delegation will visit Israel. (3) During and after the visit, final decisions will be taken in Rangoon and Tel Aviv as to the areas of cooperation between the two countries and means for implementing it. (4) The Burmese army will acquire equipment from Israel Military Industries and set up a similar industry in Burma. (5) Israel's overseas arms procurement missions will be placed at the disposal of the Burmese army.

Hacohen adds that now they must wait and see how matters develop.

Notes

1. The reference is to the nationalist leader U Aung San, assassinated in July 1947.
2. One paragraph, concerning renovation of the building, has been omitted here.

605. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassies in Washington and London. 23 December 1953

Coded Tel.: TNW323; Outg.: 130.09/2319/4

Sharett replies to Eban's telegram[1] as follows:

(1) Israel intends to submit a complaint to the Security Council in January 1954, in which the Suez Canal blockade will be described at length. (2) Meanwhile, pressure must be exerted on the United States to obtain release of the cargo that has been detained in the Canal. (3) Sharett gave instructions not to confiscate a cargo of food destined for Egypt found on a Swedish ship that docked in Haifa, so that Israel can appear in the Security Council with clean hands. He proposes that Eban make use of this information, which has not yet been made public. (4) Israel does nothing to make it appear to be an obstacle to the fulfillment of Egypt's national aspirations. Replying to a recent question from the press, Sharett even said that Israel has no intention of hindering Egypt's fulfillment of its legitimate aspirations. Israel must, however, safeguard its own vital interests, namely: (a) preserving the balance of power, as long as Egypt shows no inclination to make peace; (b) freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal.

Sharett rejects the argument that the British government is using Israel in its struggle with Egypt, but agrees that the opponents of the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations in Britain are exploiting this claim to their advantage. He adds that if such an undesirable image of Israel exists in the American press, every effort must be made to clarify Israel's position. He agrees with Eban that Egypt should be harassed only on issues that directly concern both countries.

Notes

1. See No. 598.
2. At a press conference for foreign correspondents that Sharett held in Jerusalem on 11 December 1953. It was broadcast on American television.

606. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to the Israel Delegation to the United Nations. 23 December 1953

Coded Tel.: 306; Outg.: 130.09/2330/21

Rafael, with the knowledge of Sharett and Eytan, instructs Eban how to react to the last debate in the Security Council, even though he has not yet received Eban's report on the session.[1]

(1) Action should be taken either to postpone a Security Council vote on a resolution to January 1954 or to conclude the debate without a resolution. (2) He should propose to Bennike that negotiations with Israel be resumed on the basis of its consent to guarantee water and land rights in the disputed territory. In these negotiations, Bennike would have to take into account the opinion of the West, as expressed in the speeches of its representatives and the current draft resolution, namely, that the argument of a military advantage accruing to Israel from the project and the assertion that must Syria consent to its implementation are irrelevant. During the negotiations, which would be restricted to a number of weeks, Israel would not rescind its announcement of 27 October concerning the temporary cessation of work;[2] neither would Bennike renew his call for a halt to the project.

Should the negotiations reach a successful conclusion, Bennike would report back to the Security Council.

Notes

1. See No. 601.
2. See No. 475 (Editorial Note).

607. E. Elath to W. Eytan. 24 December 1953

Note

1. See No. 580 and n. 2 there.

608. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to A. Eban. 24 December 1953

Copy: 93.02/164/2

Herzog reports to Eban on certain breaches in the diplomatic boycott connected with the transfer of the Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem. The change in attitude ranges from permission to phone the Ministry in Jerusalem (the Turkish Legation) to personal visits to the Ministry in Jerusalem (Communist bloc diplomats, Yugoslavia, the Dutch minister, and the Greek representative). Some, like the French, come to Jerusalem, but only to other ministries. The attitude of the South Americans has not changed in the slightest. The same applies to the Australians and the Swiss.

The Belgians have apparently received permission to visit the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem should there be a need to discuss a matter of particular importance to them. The Americans, who spearheaded the boycott,

will apparently begin with social calls at the homes of Foreign Ministry officials in Jerusalem. It is not clear whether there has been a change in the basic U.S. position. What can be said is that the supervision of embassy staff to ensure they do not become lax in observing the original restrictions about Jerusalem is no longer applied with the same zeal as before.

The Foreign Ministry is working diligently to widen the breaches. An example of this is the case of the Italian minister.[2] But the process will be long and drawn-out as long as the Americans do not slacken the reins. Herzog asks Eban, on behalf of Eytan, whether there is any point in appealing to the Americans at this point, and in what manner. Is there is any chance of getting the American ambassador to come to Jerusalem to meet the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister in the Prime Minister's Office?

Notes

1. See, for example, the consultation that took place on 31 August 1953, the minutes of which are in File 130.02/2404/12.
2. See No. 336.
3. See No. 408 and n. 2 there, and No. 511.

609. E. Elath (London) to W. Eytan. 24 December 1953

Coded Tel.: L240; Inc.: 130.09/2319/5

In response to the telegrams from Eytan[1] and Eban,[2] Elath reports on a visit to Selwyn Lloyd, during which he informed the latter of the confiscation of a cargo of meat carried on the *Franca Maria* and of Israel's protest to the Security Council. He told Lloyd of a further tightening of the blockade regulations in the Canal and the harm these regulations are doing to Israeli trade with Britain's African colonies. Elath emphasized that Israel views Egypt's latest step as a new act of aggression, aimed not only against it but also against the principle of free passage through the Canal. Even though Israel is not seeking a quarrel with Egypt, it cannot turn a blind eye to the latest incident, which infringes upon international rights, not only those of Israel. Elath pointed out that action must be taken to release the confiscated cargo and added that Israel hopes to receive assistance from the Foreign Office. He told Lloyd that Israel refrained from confiscating food en route to Egypt from a ship that docked in Haifa.[3] Lloyd promised to convey Elath's message to Eden. He commented that the matter is extremely serious and that the foreign secretary will have to decide on a course of action. He made it clear that Israel should not expect an immedi-

ate answer, since Eden is out of town and will not return for several days. It was Elath's impression that Lloyd related seriously to his presentation and, happy to make things somewhat uncomfortable for Egypt, will exploit this situation to press an issue on which the British public is extremely sensitive.

Notes

1. Eytan cabled Elath the text of his instructions to the Israel delegation to the UN to lodge a complaint against Egypt with the Security Council over the confiscation of the consignment of meat (17 December 1953, 130.09/2319/4).
2. See No. 598 and n. 1 there.
3. See No. 598, n. 2.
4. See No. 605.

610. E. Elath (London) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 24 December 1953

Coded Tel.: L241; Inc.: 130.09/2319/5

Replying to a previous telegram from Eban,[1] Elath expresses the opinion that it would be a good idea to prepare, in the near future, a renewed assault on the entire Suez Canal blockade issue and to coordinate it with the general policy adopted in relation to the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations. He proposes that action in the Security Council be deferred until January 1954, when new developments can be expected in the Anglo-Egyptian talks. Elath believes the negotiations will generate a new situation in which Britain would prefer to pressure Egypt with regard to the blockade and avoid a Security Council debate that would impede the talks. Egypt, on the other hand, might prefer a Security Council debate so that it can bow to UN pressure and avoid at all costs succumbing to the British. Elath recommends continued activity in connection with the blockade, even should the meat cargo be released.

As for the second paragraph in Eban's telegram, Elath states that he relies on Sharett's declaration when he explains that Israel has no interest in torpedoing the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations in Cairo.[2] Although it is true that a group of radical Conservatives are exploiting the Israeli card to strengthen their arguments against an agreement, there is another bloc (the "Bowenists") that advocates evacuation of the base in the Suez Canal but simultaneously supports the bulk of Israel's demands.

Notes

1. See No. 598.
2. See No. 605, paragraph 4 and n. 2 there.
3. See No. 587.

611. R. Shiloah (Washington) to the United States Division. 24 December 1953

Coded Tel.: 819; Inc.: 130.02/2450/1

Shiloah reports on Eban's meetings with Kay, who is in charge of UN Affairs at the State Department, and later with Byroade. Stein and Barnes were also present at the first meeting; Hart attended the second. Shiloah and Eban informed Kay of their appreciation of Lodge's position during the Security Council debate and expressed surprise at the independent activity of the French and British representatives, who conducted negotiations with the Arabs on modifications to the text of the draft resolution, which was itself a compromise that Israel had agreed to *faute de choix*.[1] They questioned the activity of the two representatives, both from a procedural point of view and in and of itself.

Eban and Shiloah believe that if the Three Powers support the agreed-upon text, a majority can be obtained for the draft resolution. The Colombian representative has already changed his mind, and it is to be hoped that the Danish and Greek representatives will not stand in the way of the required majority if the Powers stand their ground. Kay showed more cordiality, understanding, and flexibility than his predecessor (Murphy). He promised, on his own account and on behalf of the U.S. delegation in New York, to hold fast to their position. Eban and Shiloah gained the impression that the matter has been removed from the province of Byroade and his staff and will be decided by Kay and Lodge.

The talk with Byroade was confused and devoid of practical conclusions. It became clear that Byroade is less knowledgeable about and less involved in the UN debate; Eban and Shiloah were delighted by this.

They brought up the subject of Jordan's rejection of Israel's call for a conference under Article XII and demanded urgent intervention by the United States. Byroade replied that his government had brought all its influence to bear and still hopes for positive results, even though he regretted Israel's tactics. Sharp words were exchanged on this point. Eban and Shiloah emphasized that the only positive element in the Security Council resolution on Qibya was Israel's proposal for a conference with Jordan;[2] without such a meeting, the security situation in the region will only deteriorate. They raised Egypt's tightening of the Canal blockade[3] and said that

there may be no alternative to submitting the issue to the Security Council. Byroade was taken aback. He tried to explain that the Egyptian position had become more entrenched because the "Zionists" were putting a spanner in the Anglo-Egyptian agreement. Eban and Shiloah assailed Byroade for this "fiction" that is being circulated by the State Department. Byroade retracted, saying that the U.S. government will do all it could to exert pressure on Egypt. But he implored Israel not to complicate matters at this delicate juncture.

Byroade also informed them that Hasūnah has proposed reconstituting the Palestine Conciliation Commission with an expanded membership, including British and Pakistani representatives. He asked Shiloah and Eban for their reaction. Both rejected any resumption of the Conciliation Commission's activities and Hasūnah's proposal.[5]

Notes

1. See No. 603.
2. See Nos. 531 and 600 and notes there.
3. See No. 598 and nn. 1 and 2 there.
4. See No. 605.
5. Cf. the report on the meeting with Byroade in *FRUS*, 1952–1954, Vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 1462–64.

612. Meeting: J. Linton–K. Okumura. 24 December 1953

Notes

1. On 8 September 1951, representatives of Syria and 47 other countries signed the peace treaty with Japan at the peace conference in San Francisco. Syria did not ratify the treaty until late 1953.
2. The Japanese government did not appoint a minister to Israel until February 1955. His permanent residence was in Ankara.

613. E. Elath (London) to M. Sharett. 27 December 1953

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2319/5

Continuing his previous telegram[1] and the telegram from Sharett,[2] Elath reports on his talk with Aneurin Bevan on the eve of the latter's departure for Cairo. Elath advised him to relying on three points when he brings up with Naguib the question of peace with Israel: (1) Israel has no intention of

interfering in the negotiations over the evacuation of the Canal Zone or of impeding the fulfillment of the just national aspirations of Egypt. Israel's demands stem from its own natural and just rights as long as there is no peace with Egypt. (2) If Naguib intends to improve the socioeconomic status of the Egyptian masses, peace with Israel is essential for him. The radicals in Egypt will seek to exploit the absence of peace for their own aggressive ends and against the new regime, in order to sabotage its progressive goals. (3) Israel's friends in Britain and the other democratic countries would find it easier to help Egypt if it had peace with Israel.

Bevan agreed with these ideas of Elath's and said that he would use them in his talks with Naguib and his colleagues.[3]

Notes

1. The telegram has not been located; but see No. 587.
2. Sharett instructed Elath to meet with Bevan on the eve of his departure for Cairo and suggest that while there he "condemn the folly of tightening the embargo at a time like this" and put pressure on Naguib to move towards peace with Israel, "since the absence of peace helps the imperialists acquire footholds in the Middle East, as for example the American water plan," which aimed at dominating the most basic of all resources (26 December 1953, 130.02/2450/1).
3. Bevan met with Naguib on 28 December. He also had meetings with Nasser, Salim, and Fawzi. At a press conference after their meeting, Naguib said that Bevan had mentioned the apprehension felt in Britain that Egypt might attack Israel after the evacuation of British forces from the Suez Canal. Naguib said that he had promised that Egypt would never initiate hostilities against Israel, but had also declared that Egypt demanded that Israel comply with UN resolutions and allow the refugees to return to their homes.

614. M. Sasson (Athens) to the Western Europe Division. 27 December 1953

Copy: 130.02/2412/2

Sasson summarizes the evolution of Greco-Israeli relations since Marshal Papagos came to power on 16 November 1952.

(A) *The Greek Government:* The issue of *de jure* recognition of Israel has not been resolved during Papagos's first year in power and continues to be the focus of activity for Israel's mission in Greece. Papagos's government differs from its predecessor in that it does not make promises it does not intend to keep. Early in 1953, the head of the Middle Eastern Department in the Greek Foreign Ministry stressed that his country's policy towards Israel is not dictated by domestic considerations, but exclusively by foreign

policy considerations; the change of government would have no bearing on this issue. Greek relations with Egypt remain the determining factor. Sasson writes that in this area policy has remained as it was before Papagos's rise to power, that is, Greece has made *de jure* recognition of Israel contingent on peace between Israel and Egypt. Sasson adds that when the new government assumed office in Greece, Foreign Ministry personnel had held the upper hand; this explains the spirit of that foreign policy statement. In the course of the year, however, other weighty factors emerged that have had a positive influence on Greco-Israeli relations and are helping break the linkage between recognition of Israel and relations with Egypt.

The first factor is Greece's greater involvement in the Western defense system. The decision of the 1951 Ottawa Conference to add Greece to NATO was implemented in 1953. Greece's role in the Balkan defense alliance, signed this year, provided it with a clearer conception of Middle East security problems and induced it to show greater interest in regional defense. Consequently, the Greeks realized that they must normalize their relationship with Israel. Sasson estimates that the security factor could overshadow Greece's traditional interests in Egypt and advance the date of its recognition of Israel.

Another important factor is Israel's improved relations with Turkey.

Yet another factor is that the members of the Papagos government have less personal involvement with the Greek community in Egypt. The final factor was the replacement of the previous Egyptian ambassador in Athens, who had worked strenuously to prevent recognition of Israel. All these factors, taken together, constitute the background for the formulation by the Greek Foreign Ministry of a policy favoring a slow and gradual improvement of relations with Israel.

(B) *Israeli efforts to improve ties:* At first, the Israeli mission in Greece encountered severe problems relating to diplomatic protocol, such as diplomatic immunity and privileges for the mission. Most of these matters were resolved during the past year; for the first time Israelis were invited to receptions and ceremonies held under the patronage of the king or foreign heads of state.

In the course of their diplomatic activities, the Israeli representatives encountered a shocking ignorance of both Israeli and Arab affairs. Members of the mission engaged in both oral and written information activity, which has borne fruit. As a result, Israel's representatives have dared to request Greece's support at the UN in disputes between Israel and Arab countries. In two cases the Greeks responded positively. Members of the mission believe that Greece is prepared to support the Israeli cause against the Arabs in the future in cases where the West also supports Israel. Sasson notes that there is still a long way to go before Greece will give Israel preference and its full support against the Arabs; nevertheless, he estimates that the time has passed when Greece blindly opposed Israel and unreservedly

supported the Arabs.

The zenith of Israeli activity in Greece in 1953 was the assistance extended by the Israeli navy to victims of the earthquake in the Ionian islands and Israel's participation in the Salonika Fair. These two ventures contributed substantially to strengthening ties and improving relations.

(C) *Trade:* Trade between the two countries is still based on private barter deals. In the past, the two governments have not shown any interest in developing trade relations. However, devaluation of the Greek currency and the trade liberalization policy adopted by the Papagos government, together with Israel's progress in the field of exports, its participation in the Salonika Fair, and the Israeli mission's particular attention to developing trade relations have changed the situation and laid the commercial foundations for developing commercial ties between the two countries. The economic achievements in the wake of Israel's participation in the Salonika Fair were not negligible. Immediately after the fair, the Greek economic ministries reached a firm decision to take steps to strengthen economic links with Israel. It transpired that the reservations about developing trade relations with Israel are centered in the Greek Foreign Ministry rather than in the economic ministries.

After the Salonika Fair, which gave the lie to its apprehensions, the Greek Foreign Ministry proposed a clearing-house agreement between the largest bank in each country, rather than a regular commercial agreement, hoping this would avoid a negative Arab response. A similar fate befell the aviation agreement, on which negotiations had been proceeding for more than eighteen months. After pressure from various parties, however, the ministry was forced to give in and make the final preparations for the imminent signing of the agreement.

Even with the trade agreement, Israeli goods find it difficult to penetrate the Greek market, which is wide open and hard to please. American and German competition is substantial; Israeli exporters have yet to develop the quick response required by free-market conditions. Offering Israeli goods at prices equal to or slightly lower than those of the world market is a prerequisite for successful penetration of the Greek market.

Summing up this topic, Sasson expresses his confidence that strengthening trade relations between Greece and Israel is one of the best ways to improve ties with Greece in general.

(D) *The press:* There was a fundamental improvement in the attitude of the Greek press towards Israel in the course of 1953.

In conclusion, Sasson writes that even if the major objective of achieving *de jure* recognition of Israel was not realized in 1953, modest but marked progress was made in Greco-Israeli relations.

Sasson puts forward several proposals on ways of strengthening relations for consideration and discussion: (1) The controversy over the Monastery of the Cross in Jerusalem should be settled with the Greek Patriarchate.

(2) Israel should accept the Greek proposal to sign a clearing-house agreement. (3) Measures should be adopted to enable Israeli exports to penetrate the Greek market and to transfer the purchase of various commodities from other countries to Greece. (4) Effort should be invested in concluding trade and payments agreements with Greece. (5) Reciprocal visits by the heads of the chambers of commerce of the two countries should be arranged, at the initiative of the Israeli side. (6) Ships flying the Greek flag should be favored, where possible, for cargo transport to and from Israel. (7) Israel's merchant navy and military fleet should consider using Greek shipyards for repairs. (8) Israel should participate in the nineteenth Salonika Fair and organize its exhibits on the basis of the lessons learned from the 1953 Fair. (9) Negotiations should be conducted with the Greek government to reach a settlement concerning the blocked accounts of Israeli institutions in Greece. (10) Senior Greek army, navy, and air force officers should be encouraged to have greater social contact with the Israel mission in Athens. (11) The Israel-Greek friendship league, established in Athens in November 1953, should be expanded and strengthened. Formation of a parallel organization in Israel should be encouraged. (12) A group of Greek journalists should be invited to visit Israel. (13) Information and tourist services should be developed on a reciprocal basis. (14) Urgent attention must be devoted to the unsatisfactory manner in which the Greek consulates treat visa applications by Israelis. (15) The possibility of concluding a consular agreement with Greece should be investigated.

Notes

1. Should read: 1953
2. See No. 258.
3. The first two paragraphs have been omitted here.

615. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to J. Tsur (Paris). 27 December 1953

Orig.: 93.02/164/4

Rafael is reacting to Tsur's letter.[1] He shares Tsur's concern about Israel's Arab policy. The problem, however, is not the Foreign Ministry's Arab policy, but rather the lack of a Government policy implemented under a single authority, in cooperation and coordination with all agencies that influence Israel-Arab relations. Rafael views the Arab problem as "a Jewish problem." Until a solution is found, there will be no progress in Israel-Arab relations. Rafael agrees with Tsur that policy towards Israeli Arabs

affects Israel's relationship with its neighbors; hence that policy must be an integral part of a comprehensive policy towards the Arab world. In conclusion, Rafael remarks that ethical considerations are also practical considerations; Tsur need have no qualms about invoking them.

Notes

1. See No. 576.
2. See No. 356 and n. 2 there.

616. D. Hacohen (Rangoon) to the Asia Division. 28 December 1953

Tel.; Outg.: 93.13/12/13

Hacohen reports on his talk with the Burmese prime minister, U Nu, which focused on Ben-Gurion's resignation,[2] in particular his retreat to Sede Boqer and seclusion there, and the rumor concerning his interest in Buddhism. U Nu expressed a wish to provide Ben-Gurion with books on Buddhism and asked whether he has any special requests. The visit, in a pleasant atmosphere, lasted about an hour and a half. Afterwards, Hacohen accompanied the prime minister to a publishing house that specializes in translating European literature into Burmese, a subject in which U Nu is very interested. U Nu presented Tsur with one of his plays and a collection of his speeches.

Notes

1. See No. 604, n. 1.
2. See No. 488 (Editorial Note).

617. J. Tsur to E. Najar (telegram). 28 December 1953

Notes

1. See No. 573 (appendix).
2. See No. 603 (appendix).

618. E. Sasson to W. Eytan. 29 December 1953

Note

1. The document is in File 130.03/1962/10.

619. Ch. Yahil (Cologne) to M. Sharett. 30 December 1953

Orig.: 130.02/2445/7

In advance of the imminent Ministry consultation on issues relating to the Four-Power conference, Yahil notes that Israel must insist on its right to participate in the peace conference with Germany as the representative of the Jewish people, against which Germany had waged war. Efforts should be made to ensure that the reparations agreement and legislation for the restoration of property and payment of compensation be confirmed by the peace agreement and that their application be extended to all of Germany. Should this opinion not be accepted by the Great Powers, Yahil does not recommend accepting the demand that they guarantee the reparations agreement; instead, he suggests an effort to ensure that the Powers recognize the reparations agreement as a step towards satisfying Israel's just claims and support similar negotiations with East Germany. He agrees with the formula that would include claims against Austria.

Yahil explains his position as follows: (1) The prospect that the conference will find a satisfactory solution to the German question is extremely remote. He does not believe that the Soviet Union will agree to the unification of Germany without a commitment to neutrality; on the other hand, it cannot be assumed that the Western powers will renounce integration of Germany into their defense system. At best, the conference will not be a total failure and there will be agreement to continue discussions. A less favorable scenario, however, is that the failure of the conference will be more clear-cut, reinforcing and perpetuating the division of Germany. For this reason, Yahil believes that Israel should weigh not only what is desirable in the long term, but also what is in its best interests in the present circumstances. (2) Recognition of Israel as a belligerent party against Germany would provide scope for Israel's practical demands. This approach has many advantages. It paves the way for a condemnation of antisemitism in the peace treaty. This could then lead to confirmation and expansion of the reparations agreement and to expansion of provisions for the return of property and payment of compensation, whether as part of the peace treaty itself or as additional legislation based on the treaty. Israel's participation in the conference would add international confirmation of Ger-

many's admission of its guilt towards the Jewish people. On the other hand, a peace treaty would make it easier for Israel to establish normal relations with Germany. Yahil believes there is a good chance that an Israeli request to participate in the conference would be approved. (3) Yahil rejects the idea of demanding that the Powers guarantee the reparations agreement, since they are unlikely to agree and the Germans might interpret such a step as an expression of no confidence in the federal government, which would arouse an immediate negative response.

Note

1. In late January 1954, a conference of the foreign ministers of the Four Powers convened in Berlin to discuss the future of Germany and peace treaties with it. In advance of that conference, Eytan asked Israel's representatives in several European capitals and in Washington to suggest issues that Israel should present at the conference or to the Powers. Eytan added that the Ministry was already considering raising the following issues: guaranteeing the reparations payments and their application to East Germany; heirless property in Austria; and perhaps also emigration from countries in Eastern Europe where new regimes had been established after the defeat of Nazi Germany (23 December 1953, 130.09/2377/1).

620. A. Eban to H. C. Lodge. 30 December 1953

Notes

1. At that meeting, the Security Council decided to postpone further discussion of the dispute between Israel and Syria until early January 1954. The decision was reached after Denmark announced the failure of all efforts to reach a consensus on the text of the resolution. During the debate, Vyshinsky proposed that the three Western powers withdraw their draft resolution (see No. 573, appendix) and submit a new draft. He explained that his government could not support the current draft because it did not relate directly to the problem on the agenda. On the other hand, it did reflect an American attempt to acquire economic influence in the Middle East via the conflict between Israel and Syria (see *SCOR*, Eighth Year, 654th meeting, 29 December 1953).
2. See Nos. 601 and 603 (appendix).
3. At the Security Council meeting of 22 January 1954, the Council voted on a second revised version of the Three-Power draft resolution. Seven countries voted in favor, the Soviet Union and Lebanon voted against, and China and Brazil abstained. The resolution failed of adoption because of the Soviet veto. For the text of the draft, see *Yearbook of the United Nations*, 1954, pp. 73–74; cf. the appendices to Nos. 573 and 603.

621. Report by Sh. Eliashiv. 30 December 1953

130.11/2496/18

On the basis of meetings with Jews after his arrival in Moscow, Eliashiv reports that in early 1953 there was a distinctly antipathetic attitude towards Soviet Jews. The Jews were depressed and tried to boost one another's morale. The negative atmosphere was especially prominent in less-sophisticated circles, and less so in intellectual circles and work places with a large number of Jewish employees. The derogatory term "Jewish doctor" was directed against Jews. In Moscow, there had been threats to expel Jews from the city. On the other hand, many non-Jews tried to reassure their Jewish neighbors and demonstrate their friendship. The severing of relations with Israel was bad news for the Jews and added to their dejection.

The release of the doctors brought with it a considerable sense of relief; the whole affair became a past nightmare. Jews do not currently sense enmity towards them. The renewal of relations with Israel was received with great joy. Every report on this topic was a source of encouragement.

Eliashiv reports that the Moscow synagogue made a better impression on him than during his previous stay in Moscow. It is cleaner and more attractive than in the past and no longer shows signs of neglect. Eliashiv was warmly welcomed in the synagogue on one of the Sabbaths after he submitted his credentials. In a private conversation, the rabbi was more frank than in the past; the tenseness he had formerly displayed was nowhere in evidence. "We are waiting for salvation," he told Eliashiv, and asked whether there is any hope of *aliya*. He agreed to Eliashiv's request to visit him again, but suggested that he phone ahead. After the reading of the weekly Torah portion, the rabbi recited a prayer for peace and the cantor chanted the prayer for the country's leaders, Voroshilov and Malenkov.

Eliashiv adds that the Soviet press does not contain negative reports about Jews or Israel. There were two small items about Ben-Gurion's resignation.[2] Not a word was published about the Security Council debates on Qibya. Concerning the Jordan River project, there was one report on the Three-Power proposal.[3] There was no mention of Vyshinsky's first speech in the Security Council,[4] but there was of his second speech.[5]

Notes

1. See No. 552.
2. See No. 488 (Editorial Note).
3. See No. 573 (appendix).
4. In this context, see Eliashiv's telegram to the Foreign Ministry: "(1) Only from *Davar* [the Tel Aviv daily] did we learn the contents of Vyshinsky's remarks in the

Security Council on the 21st. Pay attention in the future. (2) The local press made no mention whatsoever of Vyshinsky's speech" (29 December 1953, 130.09/2325/6).

At the Security Council session of 21 December Vyshinsky proposed deferring *sine die* the vote on the Three-Power draft resolution on the Israel-Syria dispute.

5. The reference is apparently to Vyshinsky's participation in the Security Council meeting of 29 December (see No. 620, n. 1).

622. E. Najar to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram). 31 December 1953

Notes

1. See No. 620 and nn. 1 and 3 there.
2. See No. 531.

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Abbreviations
b.—born
IDF—Israel Defence Forces
n—note

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